

STARS AND STRIPES®



Illinois' Deron Williams, left, and Iowa's Jeff Homer

No. 1 Illinois, BC survive scares; Kansas upset

Back page, Pages 30-31



'King of Queens' James shows he's no lord of the dance in 'Hitch'

Page 21

Comedian Kevin James

Volume 63, No. 308 © SS 2005 G

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2005

50¢

President extends olive branch in European tour

Bush arrives in Belgium, hopes to mend ties broken over Iraq Page 12

An exhibition of conflict

Page 4



Left: The new Operation Iraqi Freedom exhibit at the 1st Infantry Division Museum in Würzburg, Germany, features a model of Staff Sgt. Raymond Bittinger of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment. Bittinger is one of two Big Red One soldiers awarded the Silver Star with Valor so far for actions during the past year.

Inset: Shauna Holman works on the exhibit. The \$70,000 display is about two-thirds finished, said museum Curator Gabriele Torony, and should open sometime this spring.

Task Force Duke awards Silver Star Medal

Two soldiers, Division Commander, Sgt. David Smith & Sgt. Raymond Bittinger, awarded the Silver Star Medal with Valor, in Würzburg, Germany, for actions during the past year.

Background: 1st Infantry Division Museum, Würzburg, Germany, features a model of Staff Sgt. Raymond Bittinger of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, awarded the Silver Star with Valor so far for actions during the past year.



LEFT: STEVE LIEWER
Stars and Stripes
INSET: KEIKO KURAYA
LIEWER/Special to
Stars and Stripes

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Michael Jackson trial: A Los Angeles judge has denied a request for a contempt citation against journalist Martin Bashir, who produced the documentary "Living With Michael Jackson" in 2003 and in the past week followed up with two more TV specials.

Court documents released Friday do not give a reason for Judge Rodney Melville's decision on the defense request, which argued that Bashir violated the court's gag order prohibiting him, as a witness, from making public statements in the 46-year-old pop star's child molestation case.

Japan's ban on beef imports: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice raised the issue of Japan lifting completely a ban on imports of U.S. beef while meeting with her Japanese counterpart for bilateral talks in Washington on Saturday.

The Japanese understood U.S. concerns and were trying to accelerate procedures "and made a commitment the issue would be resolved," said a State Department official who attended the meeting and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Hatsumasa Takashima, the Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said beef imports came up in the talks and that Japan would make an effort to meet U.S. requests.

World

Gays in the church: Leaders of the global Anglican Communion meet this week in Northern Ireland to continue a debate on gay bishops, a dispute in which no one yet discerns a solution.

"There will be no cost-free outcome from this," Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams told the Church of England's governing body last week.

"To put it as bluntly as I can," he added, "there are no clean breaks in the Body of Christ."

The primates, or leaders of the 38 national churches that comprise the communion, are meeting this week at the Dromantine Retreat and Conference Center, a Roman Catholic facility near Newry, Northern Ireland.

2002 plane crash: Families of 27 victims of a 2002 plane collision are suing Switzerland's air traffic control company and a Russian airline, the Swiss firm said Sunday.

The 120 relatives have launched legal proceedings in a court in Barcelona, Spain, against Skyguide and Bashkairian Airlines, said Skyguide spokeswoman Rosemarie Rotzetter.

Spain was the destination of a Bashkairian charter jet, which collided with a DHL International cargo plane over southern Germany July 1, 2002, killing 71 people—most of them Russian schoolchildren.

Polio immunizations: Indian health authorities will launch a new offensive to eradicate polio after the crippling disease threatened to resurface in several states and in slums across New Delhi, an official said Sunday.

India has made enormous gains in combatting polio over the past three decades. From more than 20,000 new cases reported every year during the 1980s, the number dwindled to 135 new cases last year.

But authorities have identified five states and slum clusters in the national capital as



Pontiff's recovery: Pope John Paul II blesses pilgrims during his traditional appearance at the window of his studio overlooking St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Sunday. The pope appeared in good form and spoke in a strong, relatively clear voice during the address, his second since being released from the hospital 10 days ago. From his window at the Vatican, the 84-year-old pontiff read his entire address, stopping briefly to cough and skipping a Latin prayer but continuing to the end with no apparent problems. It was a marked contrast from recent speeches in which the pontiff has struggled to catch his breath. At the end, he raised his hand in blessing. "I wish you all a happy Sunday," he said.

areas at risk of a resurgence of polio—which paralyzes and cripples children—after three reported cases this year, an official said on condition of anonymity.

Togo's army-backed government: Togolese officials on Sunday condemned the imposition of African sanctions on their late army-installed regime, while jubilant opposition leaders urged yet more pressure at home and abroad to force the regime to yield to democracy.

West Africa's regional bloc announced the sanctions—including a trade ban on Togo's leaders and an arms embargo—late Saturday, one of African leaders' most forceful responses yet against old-style assumptions of power on the continent.

Taiwan independence: China on Sunday expressed concern over military cooperation between the United States and Japan and attacked their joint statement on Taiwan as an unwelcome intrusion into Chinese affairs.

U.S. and Japanese officials meeting in Washington on Saturday listed "the peaceful resolution" of the Taiwan issue as a strategic objective and reaffirmed the two countries' security arrangements.

China claims self-ruling Taiwan as a part of its territory and has threatened to attack if the island declares formal independence.

Italy smog alert: Milan and several smaller cities in northern Italy barred cars and motorcycles from circulating Sunday to cut smog.

Electric cars and other low-pollution vehicles were exempted from the ban in Milan, which started at 8 a.m. local time and continued to 8 p.m. Other exceptions included parties for weddings, baptisms and funerals.

Similar efforts were organized in Asti,

Modena, Ferrara and Parma.

Syria-Lebanon relations: Syrian political activists called for a Syrian troop withdrawal from neighboring Lebanon in the wake of the assassination of former Lebanese premier Rafik Hariri, but expressed concern about the level of anti-Syrian protests in Lebanon.

The call comes amid intense international pressure on Syria to withdraw some 15,000 troops from neighboring Lebanon amid speculation that Damascus and the pro-Syrian Lebanese government had a hand in Hariri's Feb. 14 killing. Both governments have denied the charge.



Hariri

War on terrorism

Kidnapped Italian journalist: Waving rainbow peace flags, tens of thousands of demonstrators marched through the streets of central Rome on Saturday to press for the release of an Italian journalist abducted in Iraq earlier this month.

The somber march came days after 56-year-old Giuliana Sgrena was seen in a wrenching video pleading for her life and begging for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq.

The demonstration was planned before the video was shown Wednesday.

As demonstrators walked near the Colosseum, the arena's lights turned from white to gold, as they do when a death sentence is commuted somewhere in the world.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

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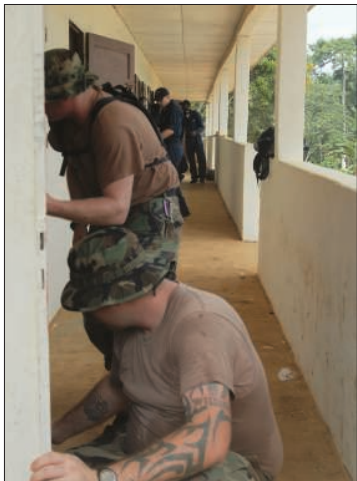
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Right: Chief Petty Officer Stephen Zentz climbs a banister to paint the outside of Ecole Catholique Notre Dame des Anges de Nkoko, a Catholic school in Libreville, Gabon, as part of a community relations project done by sailors aboard the USS Emory S. Land. Far right: Sailors refurbish three classrooms of the Catholic school Saturday, cleaning the rooms of mold, hornets' nests, huge spiders, before painting.

PHOTOS BY
SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes



Sailors show the 'other' side of the Navy

Emory S. Land sends volunteers to Gabon

BY SANDRA JONTZ
Stars and Stripes

LIBREVILLE, Gabon — Seaman Apprentice Jordan Saffell wasn't bothered by the swelter of 104-degree humid heat. She wasn't crazy about the nickel-sized spiders, but they didn't thwart her spirits.

Saffell, 18, was one of 24 sailors from the USS Emory S. Land who volunteered Saturday to patch and paint a near-dilapidated school in the province of Essassa.

"It's awesome. I love it," Saffell said. "We actually get to come out here and help, and it feels like I actually did something."

The submarine tender, based out of La Maddalena, Sardinia, is midway through a two-month deployment to the West African countries of Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana with missions spanning from repairing schools and orphanages to training the African militaries to provide coastline security.

"I like it. We're helping out people who don't have a way or the means of helping themselves," said Petty Officer 2nd Class David Miller, a Seabee.

While Gabon is a nation rich in petroleum, lumber and mined diamonds, its government leaders don't put education high on the priority-spending list, said Chaplain (Lt. Cmdr.) Gabriel Mensah, a native of Ghana, where the Land will make its next port visit.

Years of neglect led to crumbled walls and roofs of local schools, such as the Catholic school the sailors fixed up.

"It's all joy. I cannot express it," school director Obounou Ella Dieudonne said in French, the country's primary language.

The defense attaché office of the U.S. Embassy in Libreville runs the community relation projects with money supplied by U.S. European Command, said Army Staff Sgt. Ben Edouard.

With two of the five classrooms condemned because the foundation is crumbling, the sailors or volunteers refurbished the three sound rooms with new paint and patched roofs and ceilings. Officials scrapped a major restoration project when the price tag topped \$120,000 — more than the \$100,000 new school built next door, which opened Jan. 13, Edouard said.

Key to the building project is the addition of three bathrooms for the students, who used to cross a dangerous major roadway to reach a wooded area because they had no facilities at the school, Edouard said.

More sailors volunteered for the community relation projects than Mensah had jobs, a testament to their desire to help, he said. Sailors refurbished desks and chairs and played soccer at a 950-children orphanage in Doula, Cameroon, and spruced up classrooms and installed two basketball hoops and a volleyball net in Port Gentil, Gabon.

"People of these countries see the U.S. Navy and think all we do is fight wars," Mensah said. "We're here to show the other side of the U.S. Navy."

E-mail Sandra Jontz at:
jontzs@mail.strips.osd.mil



Stars and Stripes



Petty Officer 1st Class Arnaldo Torres prepares table centerpieces for a semi-formal reception aboard the USS Emory S. Land off the coast of Gabon.

Cooking under pressure on the Land

ABOARD THE USS EMORY S. LAND — Hosting a dinner party for 48 people is challenging enough, but toss in ambassadors, dignitaries, USDA regulations, food two weeks old, and sauna-like conditions in a ship's galley, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Max Agapaa was cooking under pressure.

Saturday night, Rear Adm. C. Van Mauney, director of Navy Europe Plans and Operations and Commander Submarines Allied Naval Forces South, hosted a semi-formal reception aboard the USS Emory S. Land, the La Maddalena, Sardinia-based ship midway through a two-month deployment to three West African nations of Cameroon, Gabon and Ghana.

Agapaa's planned menu of shrimp cocktail and either the prime rib or mixed seafood entree were products of what he had in the fridge.

"The menu is based on what we got before we started the deployment (on Jan. 25)," said Agapaa. "It's difficult. The food in Gabon is not approved for military use, and

what I have is two weeks old. We have to make due and do the best with what we've got."

"A little of this and a little of that. It was like shopping, only in my own fridge."

Usually, Petty Officer 1st Class Arnaldo Torres works in cargo, receiving shipments of food approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

On Saturday, he was making flowers out of potatoes, carrots and radishes and decorating a heads of lettuce for centerpieces placed at tables hosting ambassadors to Gabon from countries such as Lebanon, Russia, Cameroon, Niger and Spain.

"This is what the Navy taught me," joked Torres as he gingerly centered a toothpick-pricked potato flower in the lettuce head.

"This is very out of the ordinary for us," said Chief Petty Officer Chad White said of preparing a lavish meal on the ship. "We're not used to working in this heat and preparing such an important dinner."

— Sandra Jontz

1st ID museum puts up Iraq exhibit before troops return

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany — The 1st Infantry Division is not yet fully home from its yearlong tour in Iraq, and already its work there is being enshrined in history.

Workers at the three-year-old 1st Infantry Museum — just outside the division's headquarters building in Würzburg — are busily working on a new \$70,000 display dedicated to the Big Red One's role in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Gabriele Torony, the museum's curator, said the new display carries forward a museum "story line" that stretches from the trenches of Cantigny, France, in World War I, through North Africa, Normandy, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf to the valleys of Kosovo.

It opens with the facade of an armored Humvee that will hold a touch-screen computer, then lead visitors through an archway built to resemble the marble pillars at the 1st ID's recent palace headquarters in Tikrit, Iraq.

The archway leads to an Iraqi street scene featuring an Iraqi policeman behind a faux concrete barricade, a U.S. soldier and Iraqi soldier jointly preparing to storm into a closed building, and a female 1st ID soldier talking to an Iraqi woman and child. The floor is gritty and sandlike, with embedded glass boxes displaying examples of the insurgents' home-made bombs.

In one corner is a tribute to the division's heroes: the names of the 155 troops from the division and its

The new display carries forward a museum "story line" that stretches from the trenches of Cantigny, France, in World War I, through North Africa, Normandy, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf to the valleys of Kosovo.

attached units who died in Iraq. Standing in front of their names is a mannequin wearing an actual uniform belonging to Staff Sgt. Raymond Bittiger of the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, the division's first winner of the Silver Star for his bravery during the April 9, 2004, Battle of Baquba. He is still in Iraq.

Later, Torony said, a uniform from Sgt. Billy Barnes, the first Big Red One soldier to earn a Purple Heart in Iraq, will stand beside it.

Barbara Bower, who retired Jan. 31 as curator of the Army Transportation Museum at Fort Eustis, Va., has been sorting through thousands of digital images from the Internet, military photographers and individual soldiers. A few will be printed and mounted on the walls of the display, while hundreds more will run as part of video displays.

"I love doing this kind of stuff," she said.

Torony said the display is about two-thirds complete, but no date has been set yet for the grand opening. She, Scott Znamenski, who has been collecting artifacts for the display in Iraq. He's now back home, she said, and this week will begin working full time to get it finished.

She is confident it will be ready before the 1st ID's official "Welcome Home" ceremony in May, and hopeful she'll be able to lift the curtain as early as March.

"We're anxious to get it open," she said.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: liewer50@mail.estrpides.odm.mil

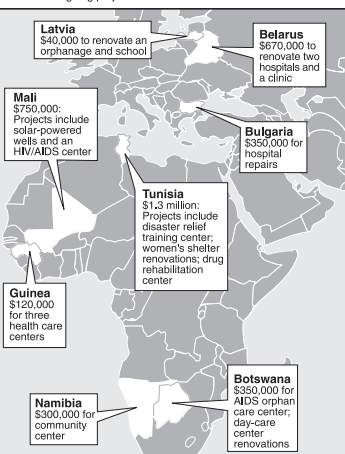


STEVE LIEWER/Stars and Stripes

Shauna Holman works on the new Operation Iraqi Freedom display at the 1st Infantry Division Museum near the division headquarters in Würzburg, Germany. The \$70,000 display is about two-thirds finished, said museum Curator Gabriele Torony, and should open sometime this spring, though no date has been set.

USAFE humanitarian projects

U.S. Air Forces in Europe's humanitarian relief program, part of a broader Department of Defense effort, aims to foster good relations with unstable regions worldwide. Below are some examples of USAFE's ongoing projects.



Source: USAFE

PETER JAEGER/Stars and Stripes

USAFE builds ties with humanitarian program

BY RUSS RIZZO

Stars and Stripes

RAMSTEIN, Germany — Much attention is paid to fighting of the War on Terror with bombs and bullets, but Capt. Jack Jackman thinks of it in terms of buildings.

Jackman, a member of U.S. Air Force Europe's acquisition staff, heads a humanitarian program aimed at fostering good relations with some of the most impoverished countries in the world.

Jackman currently oversees 25 projects valued at \$3.8 million in countries such as Botswana and Namibia. He works to build solar-powered water wells in Mali, a center for foster children who lost parents to AIDS in Tunisia, and a health care center in Guinea.

The most recent fruit of Jackman's labor is a community center in a remote village in Namibia that opened Feb. 14. Like all his other projects, Jackman found a contractor within the Air Force to hire local companies to build the center.

"You'd be amazed what we can do with little money," Jackman said.

The humanitarian relief program is part of a larger Department of Defense effort to foster good relations with unstable regions throughout the world that began after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The thinking goes that if the United States helps lift countries out of poverty, people there are less likely to become terrorists and more likely to

build strong relationships with the United States, Jackman said.

The program also helps counteract a negative image that people in some parts of the world hold of the United States because of wars in the Middle East, Jackman said.

"We want to show that we are also doing positive things," Jackman said. "A school is built and

the local village sees how it was fully funded by the U.S. with no strings attached. It's good will. It's helping people in need."

Jackman

Embassadors propose projects such as the community center in Namibia to the State Department, which approves about half of all proposals, Jackman said. Then the Department of Defense funds the programs, sending money to its different branches.

In fiscal 2004, European Command received \$7.12 million to contract out humanitarian work and gave \$1.35 million to the Air Force.

Jackman said U.S. Air Force Europe quadrupled the number of humanitarian projects it coordinated under the program in the past year and a half — a trend he hopes will continue.

E-mail Russ Rizzo at: rizzo@mail.estrpides.odm.mil

Navy honors lifesaving operation from WWII

BY TONY PERRY
Los Angeles Times

More than six decades after the fact, the Navy on Sunday will honor a World War II sailor for one of the most famous lifesaving acts of the war.

Retired Vice Adm. Michael L. Cowan will present a Navy Commendation medal to Retired Lt. Cmdr. Wheeler B. Lipes, who in 1942 performed an emergency appendectomy while aboard a submarine in the South China Sea.

Lipes was a hospital corpsman aboard the Seadranger when a fellow sailor suffered a severe appendicitis attack. Without a doctor on board and unable to surface for fear of drawing enemy fire, the sub's commander gave Lipes permission to perform the operation with improvised equipment and no antibiotics.

The incident led to a Pulitzer Prize-winning story by Chicago Daily News reporter George Weller, who interviewed Lipes and other crewmembers after the sub returned to port in Australia. The story, published in papers across the country, caused a sensation among Americans eager for uplifting news in the early stages of the war.

Hollywood used the appendic-

itis incident in the submarine movies "Destination Tokyo" and "Run Silent, Run Deep." It was also the subject of a television documentary in the 1950s.

But the Navy never formally recognized Lipes, now 85, for saving the life of shipmate Darrell Dean Rector.

In fact, doctors who ran the Navy's medical service during World War II were annoyed that Lipes had practiced medicine without a license.

Two years ago Cowan — who until recently was the Navy's surgeon general — heard of the Lipes incident and decided to correct the Navy's oversight. Lipes' resourcefulness, Cowan told a gathering of Navy doctors and corpsmen in San Diego, exemplifies the kind of "can-do" spirit needed to provide emergency care for frontline personnel during the war in Iraq.

The chief of naval operations approved a medal for Lipes. But before it could be awarded, the former sailor was diagnosed with cancer.

So on Sunday, Cowan is scheduled to make the presentation to Lipes at the Naval Hospital at Camp Lejeune, near Lipes' home in New Bern, N.C.

The commendation praises Lipes for his "resourcefulness and skillful and heroic surgical intervention under highly unfavorable conditions."

Lipes retired from the Navy in 1962 and went on to become a hospital executive. Rector did not survive the war; he was aboard the submarine Tang when it was sunk in 1944 during an attack on a Japanese transport.



Lipes

'Computer geek' becomes fighting machine off duty

BY BEN MURRAY
Stars and Stripes

A HOHENFELS, Germany — The end of their weekly sparring session in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, the students in Staff Sgt. Benjamin Bradley's martial arts class shuffled around sheepishly, waiting for someone else to volunteer. None of the students seemed to want to be the first through "the gauntlet," an exercise that requires each student to attack his teacher alone, and one-by-one, he systematically wrestled into a painful arm lock or chokehold and forced to submit by tapping the ground to signal surrender.

Though the lean, compact Bradley doesn't impart a particularly intimidating physical presence while on the mat, the students know they have good reason to avoid grappling with the signal support systems specialist from Hohenfels' 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment.

Four good reasons, to be exact: one for each of his black belts in tae kwon do, Shotokan karate, judo and Kyokushin karate. Or five if they count his undefeated record in amateur Ultimate Fighting Championship-style bouts — no-holds-barred cage matches in which combatants wear only minimal padding on their knuckles and feet.

"And I also box," said the super heavyweight silver medalist from last May's U.S. Army Europe boxing championships. The long list of fighting accomplishments is part of Bradley's life of duality: by day he is a mild-mannered father of three and self-described "radio computer geek," while in his free time he turns into a lethal hand-to-hand fighter.

Stripes Spotlight



Bradley has four black belts in martial arts and won a silver medal in the Brazilian jiu-jitsu European 2005 Championships in Lisbon, Portugal, on Jan. 29. He placed first in 2004.

Job: Signal support systems specialist with 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, Hohenfels, Germany

Age: 29

Family: Wife, Stacey; three children, Bria, Jordan and Nikolas

Hometown: Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Stars and Stripes

Though Bradley understands the art of agonizing joint manipulation and gets regular practice in choking people to the point of unconsciousness, he's pretty evenkeeled outside of the ring, said Pfc. Matthew Green, a student and coworker of Bradley's from the I-4 Regiment.

Green said Bradley often taunts other soldiers with a good-natured challenge for a boxing or karate match, but usually isn't serious.

Staff Sgt. Benjamin Bradley, right, shows students how to defeat an opponent in Brazilian jiu-jitsu with an ankle lock during a recent practice session in Hohenfels, Germany.

BEN MURRAY
Stars and Stripes

As a boss, Bradley's management style is much like his teaching method, Green said. He's attentive to detail and insistent that his students and coworkers get things right, he said.

"It's really easy to work for ... as long as you do your job right," Green said.

Green got a chance to know Bradley better in late January when the two entered the Brazilian jiu-jitsu European 2005 Championships in Lisbon, Portugal. Bradley took home the gold in his division in 2004.

For the 29-year-old staff sergeant, the Lisbon event was a return to competition after shattering his elbow in a car accident near Hohenfels last June.

"They were sure I'd be able to keep my arm," he said of his original prognosis. Doctors eventually inserted two metal plates and wires in his arm to rebuild the joint.

"I still don't have full range of motion," he said, trying to straighten his arm all the way. "But I can work with it."

Following four months of physical therapy, Bradley was on the mat to defend his title. Working his way to the finals, he took silver in the blue belt super-heavy division, losing his final match on points.

"I think it was a good showing, considering I'd been in a car accident," he said.

Bradley said he will eventually work his way up to black belt in Brazilian jiu-jitsu, but the process takes years, even with two healthy elbows.

"You earn it," Bradley said. "From every submission and every tap and every throw, you earn it," he said.

E-mail Ben Murray at: murrayb@mil.stripes.osd.mil



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Recruit's death investigation grows

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Four more Marines have been suspended while authorities investigate the death of a recruit who died during a training exercise, military officials said Saturday.

The four Marines saw a drill instructor grab recruit Jason Tharp by the shirt and hit him in the chest, according to a video shot by Columbia television station WIS a day before Tharp died. The drill instructor was suspended earlier.

Tharp, of Sutton, W.Va., drowned Feb. 8 in a swimming pool while participating in a water-survival training course at Parris Island.

Military officials have acknowledged the drill instructor's actions violated regulations.

Capt. Jamie Nott, a Parris Island spokesman, would not give the name or rank of any of the suspended Marines.

From wire reports

New U.S.-Iraqi operation targets insurgents

Joint military mission focuses on troubled cities west of Baghdad

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — After two days of suicide bombings nationwide that killed nearly 100 people, U.S. Marines and Iraqi security forces launched a joint operation Sunday to crack down on insurgents in troubled cities west of Baghdad, as the military announced the death of another soldier.

The joint U.S.-Iraqi operation was under way in several Euphrates River cities in Anbar province, including Hit, Baghdad, Hadithah and the provincial capital, Ramadi, where authorities imposed a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., the military said in a statement.

"The security measures in and around the provincial capital are designed to ensure the safety of the populace by controlling access into the city," the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force said in a statement.

"Access control points leading into the city will screen vehicles for terrorists and insurgents as well as weapons, munitions and materials to produce improvised-explosive devices," or homemade bombs, the statement said.

Ramadi, about 70 miles west of Baghdad, has long been a center of insurgent activity. In Baghdad, Shiites stung by a string of bombings attended services in fortified funeral tents in hopes of avoiding a third straight day of attacks.

On Saturday, eight suicide bombers struck in a wave of attacks that killed 55 people as Iraqi Shiites commemorated Ashura, the holiday marking the death of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad, in a seventh-century battle for leadership of the Islamic world. Similar attacks Friday killed 36 people and injured dozens.

Shiite politicians, poised to take power for the first time in Iraq's modern history, have vowed not to allow the bloodshed to begin a civil war.

On Sunday, a roadside bomb in Baghdad tar-



An Iraqi soldier stands guard Sunday over 92 Iranian and Afghan people arrested for trying to enter the country illegally without documents in the southern town of Basra in the lead up to Saturday's Shiite holy day of Ashura.

getting a convoy of Iraqi troops killed two Iraqi National Guardsmen, police 1st Lt. Ali Hussein al-Hamadani said. That same day, Iraq's major Sunni Arab tribes and political parties met in Baghdad to discuss their roles in the new government elected Jan. 30 and the drafting of Iraq's new constitution.

Iraqi President Ghazi al-Yawer, a Sunni Muslim and head of the Iraqi Party list of candidates that won five parliamentary seats in the election, was to attend the meeting with the Sunni parties and tribes.

The government said two alleged terrorists were killed in a Feb. 11 raid in Baghdad. It identified the two as Abu al-Lzz and Adel Mujtaba, known as Abu Rim, who the government said "disseminated propaganda" for the al-Qaida leader in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and created "terrorist Web sites."

Al-Jazeera television aired a videotape Sunday purporting to show al-Qaida No. 2 Ayman al-Zawahiri denouncing U.S. calls for reform in the region and urging the West to respect the Islamic world. Al-Zawahiri, who appeared sitting on the ground and in front of a brown background, said the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, "explains the truth about reforms and democracy that America alleges it wants to impose in our countries."

"Real security is based on mutual cooperation with the Islamic nation on the basis of mutual respect and the stopping of aggression," he said.

Al-Jazeera reported that the excerpt was part of a longer videotape, but it did not indicate the length of the entire tape. In Washington, the CIA said it was trying to determine its authenticity.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Sunday, at least 1,478 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,117 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 15 higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. EST Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths: Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ One Marine killed Saturday in action in Anbar province.

■ One U.S. soldier was killed Saturday in a suicide bombing.

The latest identifications reported by the military:

■ Army Sgt. Timothy R. Osbey, 34, and Army Spc. Joseph A. Rahaim, 22, both of Magnolia, Miss., died Wednesday in Iskandariyah, Iraq, after their vehicle rolled when a road collapsed; assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, McComb, Miss.

Senators upbeat on Iraq despite security threats

BY TODD PITMAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — As 55 people died from terrorist attacks in Iraq on Saturday, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., said that much of Iraq was "functioning quite well" and that the rash of suicide attacks was a sign that the insurgency was failing.

"The concerted effort to disrupt the elections was an abject failure. Not one polling place was shut down or overrun," Clinton said inside the U.S. embassy. Green Zone, a sprawling complex of sandbagged buildings surrounded by blast walls and tanks. The zone is home to the Iraqi government and the U.S. Embassy.

The five-member U.S. congressional delegation arrived in Baghdad as a series of suicide bombings and explosions killed 55 people, including an American soldier. Much of the violence was aimed at Shiite Muslims, commemorating Ashura, the festival marking the seventh century death of a leader of their sect.

"The fact that you have these suicide bombers now, wreaking such hatred and violence while people pray, is to me, an indica-

tion of their failure," Clinton said.

The senate delegation included Republicans John McCain of Arizona, Susan Collins of Maine, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Wisconsin Democrat Russ Feingold.

All but Feingold are members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which oversees the defense department budget.

Clinton said the last time she visited Iraq in late 2003, she traveled to the Green Zone by road from the international airport.

Today, security is so bad that none of the senators dared drive through Baghdad's streets, even in armored cars. Aside from the Green Zone, their only glimpse of the capital came from the relative safety of U.S. military helicopters that ferried them from the airport.

"It's regrettable that the security needs have increased so much. On the other hand, I think you can look at the country as a whole and see that there are many parts of Iraq that are functioning quite well," Clinton said.

Collins, who last visited Iraq in mid-2003, said the increased violence was "disappointing."

A year-and-a-half ago, "we

were able to move more freely in Baghdad," she said. "And one impression I have is how much more fortified Baghdad is than it was during that summer."

But Collins said much had been achieved since then, above all, the June handover of sovereignty from U.S. authorities to Iraq's interim government.

On Sunday, the senators will visit U.S. troops in other parts of Iraq.

McCain said his delegation met Saturday with interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh and Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, who is leading the American push to train Iraqi security forces so U.S. troops can eventually leave.

Clinton and McCain have often challenged the Pentagon's planning and its management of the Iraq war.

"I've said many times that we've made serious mistakes, and we've paid a very heavy price for those mistakes," Clinton said.

"We have a long, hard, difficult struggle ahead of us, but I'm far more optimistic than I was before the election, because the Iraqi people proved that they would brave the risk of their very lives



U.S. senators speak to the media Saturday inside the heavily guarded Green Zone in Baghdad. They are, from left to right, Susan Collins, Hillary Clinton and John McCain, who, along with Sens. Russell Feingold and Lindsey Graham were in Iraq to meet with the country's interim government leaders.

in order to choose their government," he said. "To me, that's very encouraging."

Graham said the U.S. military was unlikely to withdraw anytime soon.

"The one thing I've learned from this trip is that we're a long

way away from being able to leave that. That is, if the Iraqi people want us to stay, we're gonna be here for a while, in large numbers," Graham said. "I ask the American people to be patient, because what happens here will affect our security back home."

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U.S. doubles troops inside Afghan army

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The U.S. military has doubled the number of its soldiers embedded inside the Afghan army, a spokesman said Sunday, bolstering a force that's supposed to relieve American and NATO troops in war-torn provinces and along the Pakistani border.

A group of 288 U.S. National Guard soldiers arrived in Afghanistan on Friday and Saturday to serve as tactical advisers with the Afghan National Army, joining about 300 already embedded with Afghan units, Maj. Eric Bloom told The Associated Press.

"They have begun the one-week training program before they deploy to the field to meet their (Afghan) counterparts," Bloom

288 National Guardsmen join about 300 members already embedded with units

said.

Lt. Gen. David Barno, the top commander of American forces in Afghanistan, requested the extra troops to accelerate the training of a 70,000-strong government force designed to tackle renegade faction leaders and remnants of the ousted Taliban.

With both the United States and Britain considering a long-term "strategic partnership" with Afghanistan, it is unclear just when the new Afghan force will allow foreign troops to begin reducing their expensive deployment here since the ouster of the Taliban in 2001.

Starting in March, six battalions are to be trained simultaneously with the aim of having the entire force ready by December 2006, nine months earlier than originally planned, officials said earlier this month.

Barno has suggested that the American contingent of 17,000 could be trimmed this year if a reconciliation drive with Taliban followers takes off, though there is scant evidence that it is producing results.

However, U.S. commanders insist the new troops are proving excellent allies in combat operations against militants near the Pakistani borders and that the multith-

nic army is accepted by villagers in the Pashtun-dominated south, where the Taliban drew their main strength.

Meanwhile, a caller identifying himself as a former defense minister for the ousted Taliban regime said that Afghanistan's harshest winter in years is curbing Taliban attacks on U.S. and government forces, insisting the guerrilla campaign will resume once the weather eases.

"We will step up attacks as the weather changes," the caller, who said he was Mullah Omidullah Akhund, told The Associated Press.

The U.S. military says that three years after the fall of the Taliban the hard-line militia's resistance is waning. The military says it is still conducting operations during the traditionally quieter winter months but has reported few contacts with insurgents.



The Washington Post

A Marine from Weapons Company, 3rd Battalion, Fifth Regiment, 1st Marine Division patrols a street in the northern portion of Fallujah. The house is marked with an "X" to indicate that U.S. and Iraqi security forces have checked and cleared it for weapons. The family who owned the house has written "There is family" to indicate civilians inside.

U.S. feeling pressure to rebuild Fallujah

BY JACKIE SPINNER
The Washington Post

FALLUJAH, Iraq — A few days before U.S. ground forces invaded her city in early November, Raja Hamdi Hussein looked the gate of Taburak primary school, where she is director of an orphanage, cold from the wind that was blowing in through shattered windows. The white walls were covered with messages that U.S. troops presumably left when they searched the premises for insurgents and weapons.

"Fallujah Kill Bods," one message read. "USA No. 1," said another. And on a wall behind her, next to framed verses from the Koran, the Islamic holy book: "We came. We saw. We took over all."

P.S. To help you." Like many residents who have returned to Fallujah, Hussein is not sure how she feels about the military operation that silenced a

terrifying insurgency but left the city in ruins and with an occupying force whose armored vehicles roam the streets.

"We were hoping the Americans would bring us a better life than we had," she said.

As the battlefield is gradually transformed into a construction zone, U.S. officials acknowledge that they have a limited amount of time to establish faith among residents eager for life to return to normal. If they do not rebuild the city quickly enough, the officials say, they risk losing their already tenuous support, a potentially dangerous situation with insurgents still reported in the city.

"We have a matter of weeks to get this right," said Col. John R. Ballard, commander of the Marine 4th Civil Affairs Group, based in Washington. U.S. forces are working with local contractors and the Iraqi government to restore electricity and services. In the two months since residents were allowed back in the city, U.S. and Iraqi officials have reopened 10 schools, three medical clinics and two hospitals.

Current list of Iraq coalition members hard to come by

BY DEB RIECHMANN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Sometimes it's hard to know who your friends are — even if they're helping you fight a war.

President Bush, who hopes to coax more Iraq support from European allies this week, used to boast that 50 nations had joined the United States in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Today, a public listing is nowhere to be found. One thing, though, is clear: The coalition is shrinking.

"I expect to see the coalition countries begin paring down their forces as they complete their contributions," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld

told the House Armed Services Committee last week.

While a current list of coalition countries — those helping out in Iraq with troops, equipment, monetary or political support — is not easy to come by, there is a public listing of the countries that have actual troops in Iraq. These 20-plus countries, which have combat and support forces in Iraq under the command of Gen. George Casey Jr., make up the multinational force.

Daniel Goure, a Defense Department official in the first Bush administration, said current Bush officials apparently decided to start talking about a "multinational force" instead of a "coalition" to avoid questions about which countries were in or out.

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IN THE WORLD

Israel gives final OK on Gaza pullout

BY RAMIT PLUSHNICK-MASTI

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's Cabinet gave final approval Sunday to the government's planned withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four West Bank settlements, marking the first time an Israeli government decided to dismantle Jewish settlements on land claimed by the Palestinians for a future state.

Ministers voted 17-5 for the plan, sealing the political defeat of withdrawal opponents seeking to put the plan to a national referendum. The evacuation of about 9,000 settlers will begin in July and take two months.

Later Sunday, the Cabinet also was to approve the final route of Israel's separation barrier in the West Bank, initially constructed to keep out Palestinian attackers but increasingly seen as a blueprint for a final border between Israel and a future

Palestinian state.

The barrier would cut off more than 6 percent of the West Bank, about one-third of the land that would have been taken in an earlier plan rejected by Israel's Supreme Court. Expected to run about 425 miles, the barrier is about one-third complete.

With Sunday's twin votes, the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon began charting Israel's final borders unilaterally, something none of his predecessors have attempted since Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war.

Sharon, a former patron of settlers, told Cabinet ministers that "it's not an easy day, it's not a happy day," but the withdrawal was vital for Israel's security.

The government plans to allocate \$871 million for the settlers, with compensation depending on the size of a family, whether it owns or rents, what it owns and how long



Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, left, Cabinet Secretary Yisrael Maimon, center, and Vice Premier Shimon Peres attend Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem where Sharon's Cabinet gave final approval of a summer withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

it has lived in the settlement.

The Gaza vote apparently meant to soften the sting to the Palestinians of what is widely seen as the de facto annexation of parts of the West Bank.

Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas reiterated in an interview with the German news magazine Der Spiegel that Israel must dismantle all settlements and halt construction of the barrier.

"What right does Israel have to build set-

tlements on our land?" Abbas said.

In the Gaza Strip, meanwhile, Israeli troops killed one Palestinian and wounded a second on suspicion they tried to smuggle arms from Egypt to Gaza. A third man was arrested for interrogation, the army said.

The only way the withdrawal could now be stopped is if Sharon fails to get his 2005 budget passed by March 31. If he has no budget by then, his government automatically falls.

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Bangladesh ferry sinks, killing 81

BY FARID HOSSAIN

The Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh — A double-decker passenger ferry capsized and sank during an overnight tropical storm in Bangladesh, leaving at least 81 people dead and more than 100 missing, rescue officials said Sunday.

The MV Maharaaj was carrying about 200 people when it capsized Saturday night on the Buriganga River just outside the capital, Dhaka.

Divers found 44 bodies inside the sunken ferry, while 37 others were plucked from the river, said Nurul Islam, a fire brigade official supervising the rescue work.

"The accident happened in darkness and it's still unclear how many people died or sur-

vived," said Mahbubur Rahman, a local government official.

Some passengers were rescued by villagers and fishing boats.

"We fear many of the missing people are trapped inside the ferry and presumed dead," said Syed Monwar Hossain, an official at state-run Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority.

A salvage ship was trying to recover the ferry with cranes and ropes from about 20 feet of water, Hossain said.

The vessel was about 30 minutes into its journey from Dhaka to the eastern town of Chandpur when gusty winds struck just before midnight Saturday. Many of the passengers were going home to see their family ahead of two days of public holiday when it capsized and sank near the town of Pagla.

British navy promotes equal treatment for gays

The Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's navy, which until five years ago banned gays from its work force, said Monday it is joining a campaign to ensure homosexual employees are fairly treated.

The Royal Navy said it was entering a program organized by gay rights group Stonewall which advises employers on dealing with gay, lesbian and bisexual staff. The government lifted a ban on gay serving in Britain's armed forces in 2000 after a lengthy campaign spearheaded by Stonewall.

The Ministry of Defense had

said lifting the ban would undermine morale and fighting capability, but the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 1999 that the restriction was a breach of human rights.

A Defense Ministry spokesman said Monday that "the armed forces regard sexual orientation as a private matter."

Britain's army and air force have not joined the scheme, but the Ministry of Defense spokesman said they are "usually committed to equality and diversity. So far, it's the Navy that has signed up to the Stonewall campaign."

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Pakistani Shiite Muslims beat themselves with razor blades attached to chains as self-punishment Saturday in Islamabad, Pakistan, ahead of Ashura, the holiest day in the Shiite Muslim calendar.

Pakistan's Shiites mark holy day

Thousands join marches across nation despite fears of suicide attacks

BY NASEER KAKAR

The Associated Press

QUETTA, Pakistan — In an age-old ritual to mark Ashura, the holiest day in the Shiite Muslim calendar, about 20,000 worshippers marched through this southwestern Pakistani city on Sunday despite fears of a suicide attack.

Police said they arrested 36 Sunni Muslim extremists in the three days leading up to the procession through Quetta, to prevent a repeat of last year's violence when a suicide attack on the Shiite devotees left 44 people dead.

About 5,000 policemen and 2,000 troops were deployed Sunday, and road blocks were thrown up to limit access into Quetta.

On Ashura — the 10th day in the Islamic month of Muharram — Shiites mourn the seventh century death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussein, an event that led to the split in Islam between the Shiite and Sunni sects.

Processions were held across Pakistan, including Karachi, the country's biggest city and often the scene of sectarian violence.

In Quetta, police estimated that

about 20,000-25,000 people took part, beating their chests as they marched. Many failed their bare backs with blades attached to chains to draw blood in a sign of penitence.

Talib Hussain, a procession organizer, said dozens of mourners passed out because of their bleeding and were treated by doctors following in ambulances.

Most of Pakistan's Sunnis and Shiites live peacefully together, but small radical groups on both sides have a violent agenda. About 97 percent of Pakistan's 150 million population is Muslim, and Sunnis outnumber Shiites by a ratio of about 4-to-1.

Irish government: Sinn Fein leaders also command IRA

BY SHAWN POGATCHNIK

The Associated Press

DUBLIN, Ireland — In an unprecedented challenge, the Irish government on Sunday publicly identified three of Sinn Fein's top figures — Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Martin Ferris — as members of the Irish Republican Army command.

Sinn Fein rejected the accusations, which came as the party faced mounting accusations of involvement in a massive Belfast bank robbery and a wider IRA money-laundering network.

Until Sunday, successive Irish and British governments had declined to identify either Adams or McGuinness as members of the IRA's seven-member command, called the "army council," as part of its efforts to maintain good working relations with Sinn Fein's top two figures.

But during a live debate on a national radio station, Justice Minister Michael McDowell identified Adams, McGuinness and Ferris

as IRA army council members. The government's foreign minister, Dermot Ahern, later backed that assessment.

"We're absolutely satisfied that the leadership of Sinn Fein and the IRA are interlinked," Ahern said.

McGuinness, who served two short prison sentences for IRA membership in the mid-1970s, denied the charge.

Irish government leaders' new decision to shine a spotlight on these views comes at an unprecedented moment in Northern Ireland.

For the first time the Irish and British governments and other major parties in Northern Ireland unanimously agree that the IRA's refusal to disarm and disband is the key obstacle to achieving a lasting peace.

By identifying Sinn Fein leaders publicly as leaders overseeing such activity, the Irish government is making its strongest accusations yet of Sinn Fein involvement in crime.

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Ex-presidents view Aceh province

Distraction stuns Bush and Clinton

BY CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA
The Associated Press

LAMPUNK, Indonesia — Former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton peered from the windows of a helicopter at a vast wasteland of destruction on Sunday, touring Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh province as the leaders of private U.S. aid efforts for victims of the disaster.

The two men met Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono after arriving from Thailand, where they got their first look at the devastation and grief unleashed by the Dec. 26 catastrophe.

Bush and Clinton said they came away reassured that Indonesia would channel aid funds in a transparent, effective way.

"Nothing turns private donors off more than if they saw waste, or fraud, or something like that," Bush said. "But we don't anticipate that. We're very reassured by what the president said, that it's essential that not only our observers and our NGOs, that the Indonesians go forward with us and with other donor nations to be sure that it's delivered most effectively, less overhead and certainly no corruption."

Indonesia is considered among the world's most corrupt countries, and local anti-corruption watchdogs are already alleging that officials have been siphoning aid meant for Aceh.



Former Presidents George H.W. Bush, center, and Bill Clinton, right, visit the USS Fort McHenry, which is involved in rebuilding efforts in Aceh Province, Indonesia, as they tour areas affected by the Dec. 26 tsunami.

AP

U.S. military helicopters ferried the two former presidents and their entourage from the provincial capital Banda Aceh over a barren, desert-like landscape stretching deep inland from the coastline, to the village of Lampunk, where the sole structure still standing is a large white mosque.

The village had 6,500 inhabitants before the disaster. Only 700 remain.

"I've never seen anything like this in my entire life. Ever," Bush said.

Clinton asked a villager, Akhi Sukri, what the survivors needed

most. "Everything," Sukri replied.

Standing amid the debris of Lampunk, Clinton said that seeing the destruction first-hand helped him understand how so many people died. The official tsunami death toll ranges from 169,070 to 178,118. The number of missing is believed to be as high as 128,426, with most presumed dead.

Bush and Clinton later flew on to the USS Fort McHenry, a vessel that has ferried supplies, rice, water and clothing to shore. They thanked troops, posed for photographs with them, and donned

baseball caps with the ship's insignia.

The United States deployed a carrier battle group and about 20 helicopters for relief operations off Aceh's western coast — its biggest military operation in Southeast Asia since the Vietnam War. Washington has pledged \$950 million for relief efforts for the tsunami-hit countries.

The two former presidents were asked by current President Bush, the elder Bush's son, to lead the U.S. effort to provide private aid to tsunami victims. They were to arrive later Sunday in Sri Lanka and planned to visit the Maldives on Monday.

China urges North Korea back to talks

BY STEPHANIE HOO
The Associated Press

BEIJING — A top Chinese Communist Party official was in the North Korean capital Sunday seeking a change of heart after Pyongyang reportedly rejected any further negotiations over its nuclear weapons program.

The head of the party's international department, Wang Jian, "exchanged views" on international and regional issues with North Korea's No. 2 leader Kim Jong Nam, Chinese state media reported without elaborating.

China is trying to draw North Korea back to six-nation talks on its nuclear program — a task that has taken on greater urgency since Pyongyang's explosive but unconfirmed declaration

earlier this month that it has become a nuclear power.

Wang, who arrived in Pyongyang Saturday for a four-day visit also planned to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, according to South Korea's Munhwa Ilbo newspaper.

China's Foreign Ministry said Sunday it had no immediate comment on Wang's trip.

Chinese state television sought to put a positive spin on the talks, citing comments by the North's U.N. envoy, Han Sung Ryol, to a South Korean newspaper on Thursday that his country would return to talks under certain "preconditions," namely that the United States drop its "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang.

But China's state news agency, Xinhua, reported Saturday that the North had reiterated

its decision on Feb. 10 to indefinitely suspend its participation in six-party talks with the United States, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

During three rounds of talks in Beijing since late 2002, North Korea has demanded more aid and a peace treaty with Washington in exchange for abandoning nuclear development.

North Korea had also sought one-on-one talks with Washington but withdrew that offer on Saturday, citing what it called the United States' persistent attempts to topple the communist regime, Xinhua said.

North Korea "has no justification to take bilateral talks ... on the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula with the United States now," Xinhua quoted an unnamed spokesman as saying.

Second head removed

CAIRO, Egypt — Egyptian doctors on Saturday removed an undeveloped head that was linked to the skull of a 10-month-old girl, an official from the health ministry said.

Ahmed Barakat said surgeons at a hospital in the Nile Delta town of Benha, some 25 miles north of Cairo, treated the baby for craniofacial parasitic, a rare birth defect where a child's skull is linked to the head of an undeveloped twin. The rudimentary head is usually thought to be parasitic.

He said the operation on Saturday lasted about 13 hours and that the girl, Manar, is now in intensive care.

"She is fine and doctors are trying to prevent any complications," he said.

A separate twin sister, Noora, is healthy after initial complications.

The twin sisters were born on March 30 last year.

Rabies-infected lung

FRANKFURT, Germany — A German woman has died of rabies weeks after receiving a lung from a donor who was later found to be infected with the disease, hospital officials in Hannover said Sunday.

Two other patients who also received organs from the same 26-year-old donor remain hospitalized in critical condition at the clinics of Moringen and Hannoversch Münden. The donor showed no symptoms of rabies at the time of her death, health officials have said.

Doctors at the Hannover School of Medicine had been treating the woman, who died late Saturday, with the antiviral drug ribavirin and a combination of other medicines similar to a cocktail credited with saving the life of a rabies-infected teenager in the United States.

Three more patients who received organs from the same donor are still healthy.

In September a cocktail of drugs including ribavirin was given to Jeanna Giese, 15, after she was bitten by a bat at a Wisconsin church. Giese became the first person known to survive rabies without vaccination.

4 kids slain in China

BEIJING — Two men broke into a skating rink in China's far northwest and killed four children, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Sunday.

The report didn't speculate on a possible motive. Calls to area police rang unanswered Sunday night.

The men also seriously injured at least eight other children after they crashed into the rink on the third floor of a shopping center Sunday afternoon in Shanshan, a county in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, Xinhua said.

It didn't say what weapon they used.

One of the men jumped out of the building and died, and the other was arrested by police, the report said.

From The Associated Press

Two Americans found dead in central Mexico

The Associated Press

MEXICO CITY — The bullet-riddled bodies of two U.S. citizens have been found in the central Mexican state of Michoacan, U.S. and Mexican authorities said Saturday.

The bodies of the Americans were found with two other bodies found on Friday near Tacamabaro, about 150 miles west of Mexico City.

Family members identified the U.S. victims as Omar Chavez and Alejandro Munoz of Dallas, said U.S. Embassy spokeswoman Diana Page. Munoz was a U.S. Army reservist.

The bodies of Mexicans Mariano Perez and Delino Perez also were recovered, said Ignacio Roque, spokesman for the Michoacan state attorney general's office. An assault rifle was used in the

killings, an indication that drug trafficking groups may have been involved, according to local media reports.

But the federal attorney general's office, which can intervene in organized crime cases, on Saturday said the investigation remains in the hands of local prosecutors.

The U.S. State Department issued the travel alert in January, telling Americans that violent

crime related to drug trafficking, including murder and kidnapping, had increased in northern Mexico along the U.S. border.

The four men had disappeared more than a week ago, and the bodies already showed signs of decomposition when discovered.

While the men appeared to have been shot to death, state authorities were performing autopsies, Roque said.

IN THE STATES

Bush hopes to mend ties with European leaders

BY TOM RAUM
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Bush is extending an olive branch to European leaders who opposed his Iraq policies. Recent international developments, plus a whirlwind charm offensive by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, have bolstered the prospects for a trans-Atlantic reconciliation.

Bush's own re-election, along with elections in Iraq and the Palestinian territories, have helped put Bush and most European leaders on the same page.

"My trip to Europe is to seize the moment and invigorate a relationship that is a vital relationship for our own security, as well as ... for long-term peace in the world," Bush said ahead of the five-day visit that was beginning Sunday.

Analysis

On the first overseas trip of his second term, the president also hopes to increase

pressure on Iran and Syria.

During her well-received tour of Europe and the Middle East this month, Rice said the United States "stands ready to work with Europe on our common agenda, and Europe must stand ready to work with America."

Even so, Bush has a history of alienating leaders on the continent with blunt words and actions that many Europeans associate with a cowboy. Polls show that Bush remains unpopular in Europe.

"There are a lot of people in Europe who don't really comprehend how this got re-elected. There's a basic distrust of him and his administration. But everybody also realizes he's going to be around for the next four years," said Ivo Daalder, an expert on Europe for President Clinton's National Security Council staff.

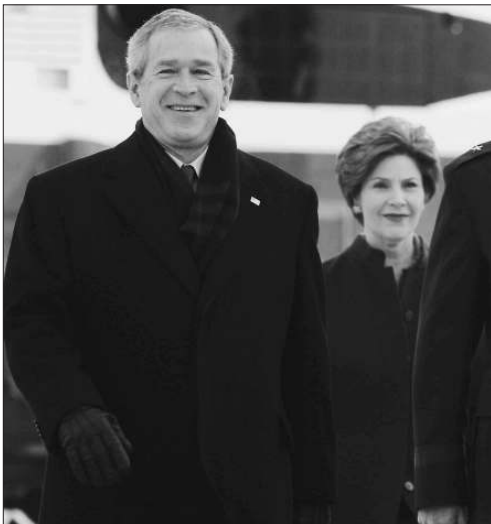
"The real question is whether the president and the Europeans are willing to engage in a serious dialogue or continue to talk past each other," Daalder said.

It could be a big order.

Even apart from Iraq, the United States and Europe have wide differences on trade, Iran and the Kyoto global warming pact. Then there is Europe's aspirations for its own military force and the jurisdiction of an international criminal court. Also, Europe is proposing to end a 15-year-old arms embargo against China and is upset by a weak U.S. dollar that is squeezing European exporters.

"Expectations should be kept in check," said Julianne Smith of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The trip itself is an important symbolic gesture but it will not succeed in eliminating deep strategic differences."

The president is stopping in Belgium, Germany and Slovakia. He will attend NATO and European Union meetings and hold separate meetings with three of the most vocal critics of the U.S.-led war in Iraq: French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Russian President Vladimir Putin.



President Bush and first lady Laura Bush walk toward Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base outside Washington on Sunday en route to Brussels, Belgium.



A caricature of President Bush was part of a protest against his pending arrival in Belgium on Sunday.

President arrives in Belgium

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — President Bush's arrival in Brussels Sunday to begin a five-day conciliatory swing through Europe to heal the trans-Atlantic rift that opened during his first term, notably over the Iraq war.

Bush and his wife, Laura, arrived aboard Air Force One, the presidential plane, that landed at the Brussels airport in cold, windy weather at 9 p.m. CET. They were met by Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt and three U.S. ambassadors in Brussels, one each for the European Union, the NATO alliance and Belgium.

The president is making stops in Germany and Slovakia over five days. He will attend NATO and European Union meetings and hold separate meetings with three of the most vocal critics of the U.S.-led war in Iraq: French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Other prickly issues on the agenda will be European negotiations aimed at persuading Iran to abandon its nuclear program and Europe's plans to scrap its 15-year ban on selling weapons to China.

Hundreds protest visit in Brussels

BY ROBERT WIELAARD

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Hundreds of demonstrators protested President Bush's visit Sunday, hours before he was to arrive in Belgium.

Bush will meet with more than two dozen European leaders during a tour aimed at healing the trans-Atlantic rift that opened during his first term, notably over the Iraq war.

"He is coming to persuade and influence the European leaders. We are afraid the European leaders will distance themselves from their people," said Pol de Vos, one of about 700 anti-Bush protesters marching peacefully

in downtown Brussels.

Police have mounted an unprecedented security operation for the visit, deploying 2,500 officers — 1,000 more than usually deployed for the three or four summits that bring European Union leaders to the Belgian capital each year.

An alliance of 88 environmental, human rights, peace and other groups have planned protests near the U.S. embassy for Monday and near the EU headquarters on Tuesday.

The Web site of the "Stop Bush" alliance accused Bush of "crimes against humanity," saying he undermines international law and is an obstacle to the fight against global warming.

"We are afraid the European leaders will distance themselves from their people."

Pol de Vos
Protester

Secret tapes reveal candidate Bush's concerns, strategies

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Private conversations with a tape Bush secretly taped by a friend before he was elected president foreshadow some of his political strategies and appear to reveal that he acknowledged using marijuana, The New York Times reported Saturday.

The conversations were recorded by Doug Wead, a former aide to George W. Bush's father, beginning in 1998, when

Bush was weighing a presidential bid, until just before the Republican National Convention in 2000, the Times said in a story posted on its Web site.

The tapes show Bush crafting a strategy for navigating the tricky political waters between Christian conservative and secular voters.

He is heard repeatedly worrying that evangelicals would be angered by a refusal to bash gays and that secular Ameri-

cans would be turned off by meetings with evangelical leaders.

On one tape, Bush explains that he told one prominent evangelical that he would not "kick gays, because I'm a sinner. How can I differentiate sin?"

In early tapes, Bush dismisses the strength of Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., for the nomination and expresses concern about rival Steve Forbes.

Bush also criticizes then-Vice President

Al Gore for admitting marijuana use and explains why he would not do the same.

"I wouldn't answer the marijuana questions," he said, according to the Times. "You know why? Because I don't want some little kid doing what I tried."

The White House did not deny the authenticity of the tapes.

The governor was having casual conversations with someone he believed was his friend, White House spokesman Trent Duffy said, referring to Bush.

NAACP knocks Bush's Social Security plan

BY ERIN TEXEIRA

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Denouncing President Bush's plan for Social Security reform as one that would disproportionately hurt blacks, NAACP leaders asked to meet with the president to discuss the issue, the NAACP chairman announced Saturday.

Julian Bond, speaking at a news conference during the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's annual meeting here, also said he expects to name the Baltimore-based organization's new president by July.

"I want someone with the fund-raising ability of Bill Gates, with the oratorical abil-

Group's leaders seek meeting with president

ity of Martin Luther King and the managerial ability of someone who's managed big, big things successfully and done well," said Bond, who has repeatedly declined to identify potential candidates.

A search committee has interviewed more than 200 candidates to replace Kweisi Mfume, who was NAACP president for nine years and resigned in December.

Last week, NAACP leaders asked to meet with the president, submitting a letter to the White House that detailed their concerns over education and unemploy-

ment, but focused largely on Bush's plan to privatize Social Security.

"This proposal is extremely dangerous to us," said Hilary O. Shelton, the NAACP's Washington bureau chief.

Among married couples, twice as many blacks as whites rely on Social Security for their entire retirement income, and blacks in their 50s are twice as likely to become disabled as whites, he said.

But Bush says blacks would stand to benefit from his privatization plan because, on average, they die earlier than whites and

would not have to wait until retirement to receive benefits.

That argument has rankled many black leaders who denounced the president for trying to capitalize on the life-span disparity problem — one they say is rooted in health disparities and urban violence — rather than solve it.

"It's disingenuous for him in the context of this debate to raise those issues, to use those numbers to support an initiative that's flawed on its surface," Shelton said.

In other goals for 2005, the association also plans to curb police brutality by setting up watchdog groups, to urge removal of the Confederate flag from South Carolina's statehouse and to reduce racial disparities in education and health, Bond said.

Washington lags behind as polls ask Americans for best president

BY WILL LESTER

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — When Americans rate their greatest president, they do not agree on who tops the list, but seem to rank a half-dozen chief executives ahead of the nation's first.

George Washington tied for sixth place in one recent poll and rated seventh in another.

"Let's face it. First in war, first in peace, and seventh in the hearts of his countrymen, doesn't sound very impressive," said Ted Widmer, a professor of history at Washington College in Chestertown, Md.

After Washington's death in 1799, Congress adopted the description Henry Lee used in his eulogy of his fellow Virginian: "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

But in a poll commissioned by Washington College for President's Day, Americans rated Abraham Lincoln as the greatest president. A CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll put Ronald Reagan on top.

Asked who was the greatest president, 20 percent of those polled chose Lincoln. Reagan was picked by 15 percent, Franklin D. Roosevelt by 12 percent, John F. Kennedy by 11 percent, Bill Clinton by 10 percent and George W. Bush by 8 percent. Washington was picked by 6 percent.

In the CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll, Reagan had 20 percent, followed by Clinton and Lincoln at 16 percent each, then Roosevelt and Kennedy at 12 percent.

The poll done for the college looked at how much the public knows about Washington and found that 46 percent knew that Washington led the Continental Army during the American Revolution.

Two-thirds knew his wife's name, Martha, and that he lived at Mount Vernon, his estate on the banks of the Potomac River in Virginia.

"You learn about George Washington in elementary school," said Charles Quigley, executive director of the Center for Civic Education. "The push toward accountability and testing in math and reading has tended to diminish greatly the amount of time spent on social studies."

A lifetime of good work cut short

Growing up in Ohio, slain nun learned compassion, love for the environment

BY JAMES HANNAH

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — Growing up during the post-Depression years with nine brothers and sisters, Dorothy Stang learned early about compassion. She and her siblings were allowed 11 inch of water in the bathtub to wash and another to rinse, but at the same time their parents opened their house to the homeless and cared for anyone in need.

Those lessons compelled Stang to leave high school for a convent after her junior year, leading to 39 years of missionary work in Brazil, where she tried to help the poor and prevent loggers, ranchers and land speculators from destroying the Amazon jungle.

At age 73, the nun who rode a motorcycle, wore hand-painted T-shirts and craved chunky peanut butter was shot six times at close range on Feb. 12.

Authorities said Saturday that a suspect in the killing surrendered to police. Anair Freijoli da Cunha, known as Tato, was taken into custody after turning himself in to police in Altamira, a city about 82 miles from where Stang was shot, police said.

Two purported gunmen and a rancher accused of ordering the slaying remained on the loose, police investigator Ana Indira Vaz said. Arrest warrants for Cunha and the three other suspects had been issued Monday.

Cunha allegedly was the intermediary who hired the gunmen on behalf of rancher Vitamirio Gonçalves Moura, known as Bida, police said. Authorities claim Moura ordered the killing.

Thousands of mourners held an all-night vigil and filed past Stang's coffin for Cunha and the three other suspects in the jungle town of Anapu. On Thursday, Brazil's president ordered the creation of a huge environmental protection area in the lawless region. Stang, a naturalized Brazilian, had helped poor residents grow vegetables, plant trees, set up a flour mill and build a small dam for electricity.

Letters to her family reflected her growing concern for the region including Anapu, home of 7,000 people. "We're in the midst of serious land problems, as the rich just can't let the needy also have something to earn their daily bread," she said in a 2002 letter.

Stang, known as "Dot" by her family, grew up on the outskirts of Dayton, the fifth of 10 children. There was a barn,



Barbara Richardson becomes emotional Wednesday as she talks about her sister Dorothy Stang during a memorial service at Chaminade-Julienne High School in Dayton, Ohio. Stang was shot to death in the town of Anapu, Brazil, while doing missionary work. Richardson said Stang's compassion sprang from her family's willingness during her childhood to open their home to strangers.

chickens, rabbits, a river and a back yard where Stang often hit home runs over the clothesline.

Her father, Henry, a chemical engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, believed in wasting nothing. Fire-treads were used to resole shoes. Apple and potato peels were saved for compost.

That frugality led to her environmentalism, and her compassion sprang from the family's openness to strangers, said one of Stang's younger sisters, Barbara Richardson.

"We took in everybody," said Richardson, of Dayton. "They'd stay a week, two weeks, until they got a job at

one of the factories."

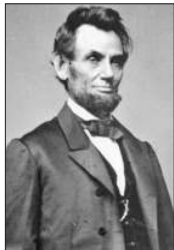
In high school, Stang worked for the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor, making dressings and bandages. That experience prompted her to leave Julienne High School and enter a Cincinnati convent.

Two of her brothers became priests. She taught at a Catholic middle school in Chicago and was a missionary in Arizona, helping American Indians and migrant workers.

From Brazil, Stang sent relatives photos that showed her wearing wire-rimmed glasses and a wooden crucifix while riding a burro or her mud-caked, off-road motorcycle.

"She didn't want anybody to think she dressed better, had more, or did different than the people," Richardson said.

"She was a little old nun," she said. "Who ever thought anybody would kill her?"



President Abraham Lincoln has been labeled the nation's greatest president by the American people, according to a recent poll.



Stang

Suspect's release angers Denver residents

Man allegedly sexually abused five after admitting to earlier attack

BY CATHERINE TSAI
The Associated Press

DENVER — As a serial rape suspect returned to Denver in handcuffs, about 250 people gathered outside a store owned by one of the victims and expressed anger that the man had been allowed to go free after allegedly confessing to another crime.

Brent J. Brents is a suspect in five sexual assaults on women and girls earlier this month in Denver — crimes committed after police said he confessed to an earlier attack but was released.

He was arrested late Friday in western Colorado while driving a car believed to have been taken from a woman whom he

allegedly brutally beat. He was returned to Denver Saturday and held in lieu of \$25 million bail.

At the rally Saturday outside a pet shop, residents shouted and shook noisemakers when a friend of the victim asked how many were angry and baffled that Brents had been freed after previous allegations against him.

"Acts of violence against women and children cannot be tolerated," the owner's fiancé told the crowd.

Brents, 35, was accused late last year of inappropriately touching a former girlfriend's 8-year-old son but never arrested, despite allegedly telling officers the boy was telling the truth.

Aurora Police Chief Ricky Bennett has

said Brents was allowed to leave because additional investigation was needed.

Brents had been released from prison months earlier after being sent to a state hospital for about three years and then to prison for 14 years for raping a young boy and a girl.

He was linked by DNA evidence to the string of rapes in Denver, police said, and is also a suspect in an October sexual assault.

He was arrested Friday after allegedly beating a woman and stealing her car and cell phone. The victim of Friday's attack was in serious but stable condition at a Denver hospital, police said.

Police tracked calls made from the stolen phone and arrested Brents about 150

miles west of Denver. He was with a woman whom police described as a victim, but she did not immediately disclose whether she had been kidnapped.

The string of rapes in Denver began Feb. 11 with the rape of the 44-year-old pet shop owner and another woman blocks away. Brents is also a suspect in the sexual assaults on two 11-year-old sisters and their 67-year-old grandmother, according to an arrest warrant.

Police encouraged other possible victims to come forward.

"We have significant reason to believe that there are many, many additional victims," said Dave Fisher, the police department's chief of investigations.

Associated Press writers Erin Gartner and Don Mitchell contributed to this story.

Officer killed

CHICAGO — An off-duty correctional officer shot and killed a friend and co-worker Saturday when he mistakenly believed was trying to carjack a vehicle being driven by his wife, police said.

Artin McClendon, 36, was killed while trying to pull a joke on a longtime friend in an area where two dozen carjackings have occurred in less than a year, authorities said.

"It is a tragic accident, a case of mistaken identity," said Calumet City police Sgt. Larry Smith.

From wire reports

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1,340.1
Dollar buys	€0.642
British pound	\$1.94
Japanese yen (Feb. 22)	103.00
South Korean won (Feb. 19)	999.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.8947
Canada (Dollar)	1.2316
Denmark (Krone)	5.1032
Egypt (Pound)	6.8116
Euro	\$1,306.7/0.7653
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7996
Hungary (Forint)	195.51
Iceland (Krona)	61.795
Israel (Shekel)	4.9502
Japan (Yen)	105.64
South Korea (Won)	999.00
Norway (Krone)	6.3478
Philippines (Peso)	54.69
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7500
Singapore (Dollar)	1.6367
South Korea (Won)	5.9676
Switzerland (Franc)	1.1829
Thailand (Baht)	36.54
Turkey (New Lira)	1.4045
(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For non-military exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

PRECIOUS METALS

New York Merc class	\$427.13
Gold	\$741.3
Silver	\$7.413

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.50
Discount rate	5.50
Federal funds market rate	2.50
3-month bill	2.60
90-day bill	4.65
Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America	

Little lions, big task



Nikko Jow, 7, left, and Ray Gamboa, 12, with the San Francisco Police Department Lion Dancers, prepare to lead the Chinese New Year's parade up Market Street to Chinatown in San Francisco on Saturday.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/AP

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Cash rewards

The Associated Press

Cash is king, goes the maxim, and a new survey suggests that is especially true for credit card reward programs.

Consumers are far more interested in cash back and other such monetary rebates than they are enamored of a first-class airline upgrade or a

free trip from reward points. More than 65 percent of those surveyed said cash back was preferable to free travel (34 percent) or special benefits or upgrades (33 percent).

The survey involved 1,000 people in an October online survey conducted by Maritz Loyalty Marketing, part of St. Louis-based Maritz Inc.

Boy found guilty

MARIETTA, Ohio — A 12-year-old boy was convicted Saturday in the shotgun slayings of his aunt and grandmother. He was expected to be imprisoned until age 21.

Bryan Christopher Sturm told investigators he shot his grandmother at her southeast Ohio home on Nov. 22 because she constantly criticized him, according to an affidavit filed by the Washington County sheriff's office.

He said his aunt was accidentally shot in the head when she grabbed the gun.

From wire reports

Residents won't leave homes for expansion

BY MATT APUZZO
The Associated Press

NEW LONDON, Conn. — Fifteen houses are all that remain of Fort Trumbull, a once vibrant immigrant neighborhood flattened into expanses of rutted grass and gravel.

The homes stand in defiance of New London's plan to pave the way for a riverfront hotel and convention center, offices and upscale condominiums.

Refusing the city's efforts to get them to leave, seven families are going before the U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday, arguing that the city has no right to take their private property solely for economic development. The rebellious homeowners include an elderly Italian immigrant, a mechanic and a former deli owner.

"It's a case of the rich eating the poor," said Matthew Dery, who lives in one of four houses. "Sometimes the poor are difficult to digest."

Leading the charge is Susette Kelo, a 47-year-old nurse who bought her home in 1997.

But Kelo's apricot-colored house, with a decorative outhouse in the front yard and wind chimes made of silverware, doesn't fit in the city's development plans.

"They just would not be compatible with all the other uses," said Edward O'Connell, an attorney representing the New London Development Corp., the quasi-public agency behind the redevelopment effort.

Whether building highways or public offices, laying railroad tracks or eliminating blight, governments to take private property for "public use."

The Fifth Amendment allows governments to take private property for "public use." The Supreme Court has given governments broad power to take private property through eminent domain, provided the owner is given "just compensation."

OPINION

States smart to cover all bases with BRAC

Politics aren't supposed to factor into the equation used to determine whether a military base should remain open or be closed in the coming round of reductions and realignments.

J.R. Labbe

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said that the 2005 base realignment and closure, or BRAC, process "should be the means by which we reconfigure our current infrastructure into one in which operational capacity maximizes both warfighting capability and efficiency."

Translation: If the facility adequately and effectively supports the military of the 21st century, it stays.

"America simply cannot do military transformation without BRAC," said Kenneth Beeks, vice president of policy for Business Executives for National Security. "The Department of Defense is not a jobs program. It is not the role of the Defense Department to provide employment for Americans; it is to protect America so we can find other jobs."

Yet elected officials from unpaid city mayors to high-profile governors and U.S. senators are investing political capital and lots of money into efforts to keep their local bases from ending up in the crosshairs of the BRAC Commission specifically because they are jobs programs in their communities.

At least four lists are circulating on the Internet naming bases that could be targeted for closure under the BRAC process in 2005, the first time the Pentagon has undergone this exercise in a decade.

Theoretically, every one of those Internet lists is accurate because every military facility in the country is supposed to be up for review.

The 2005 process aims to eliminate nearly 25 percent of the military's infrastructure. The 2005 closures are expected to exceed all the reductions in the four previous rounds of consolidation combined.

The National Defense Authorization Act of 2002, which authorized this generation of closures, requires the Pentagon to "consider all military installations within the United States equally without regard to whether the installation has been previously considered for closure or realignment by the department."

"Understandably, many of our local community partners will have great concerns over BRAC 2005," wrote then-Secretary of the Army Thomas White in a December 2002 letter to his top brass. "We must avoid creating an expectation in the local communities that any action or group of actions would preclude an installation from being considered for realignment."

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England issued a similar caution a month earlier in a letter to his command, calling for "every Navy and Marine Corps installation (to) be treated equally and fairly."

Yet here we are, two years later, and BRAC has become a full-employment act for high-priced lobbyists and retired generals who profess to be able to influence a process that, according to Christopher Hellman, military policy analyst for the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, was "specifically designed to insulate decision makers from lobbyists."

How much money are we talking about?

■ The state of Florida is paying \$50,000 a month for a rent-on-admiral named Robert Natter and a lobbying firm to spearhead the Sunshine State's BRAC efforts, reports the Jacksonville Business Journal.

■ California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has earmarked \$50,000 to advise communities on how to tell the Pentagon why it should keep all 62 of the Golden State's

military installations.

■ Separately, the Beale Regional Alliance Committee in Yuba County, Calif., has raised more than \$100,000 to hire lobbyists to fight for Beale Air Force Base, which houses a U-2 intelligence squadron.

■ Texas voters approved a \$250 million bond program in 2003 to help the Lone Star State retain its military installations. Gov. Rick Perry's Web site reports that Texas gets a \$33.8 billion direct impact from its 18 military bases and other defense-related spending. In addition, the state benefits from a \$7.4 billion indirect impact — from the extra civilian jobs and spending generated by the military presence in Texas communities.

San Antonio business leaders have raised \$750,000 for a push to keep their local bases open, reports the San Antonio Express-News. San Antonio has reason to protest: The Army's Fort Sam Houston and Brooks Air Force Base both are on the Internet lists of likely closure candidates.

To compound the sweet factor, Brooks, a small nonflying research base, was on the 1995 BRAC list but dodged the shutters when nearby Kelly Air Logistics Center was closed instead.

But the communities' money may be ill spent.

"It's a waste of money," said Jack Spencer, senior policy analyst for Defense and National Security in the Kathryn and Shelby Cullom Davis Institute for International Studies at The Heritage Foundation.

"A community would be far better off in spending that money to hire someone to help develop a plan in case the base is closed."

Business Executives for National Security's Beeks, a former naval officer, agrees.

"It's money that could be better spent trying to prepare for life after BRAC," Beeks said. "If they are hellbent on doing this, mostly for political reasons. They can't be seen to. Politically they have to make a run at trying to save the base if they want to continue as mayor or city manager or whatever they may be."

Alas, all decisions that germinate inside the Beltway are fertilized by politics, the Miracle-Gro of government. If one elected official is going to spread a little enrichment on the process, the other can't be expected to just stand by and watch.

That may explain Perry's surprise lobbying fury to the Pentagon in December. Without notifying or inviting Texas congressional lawmakers to join him, Perry dropped in on top defense officials Dec. 4 to boost the state's chances in the coming round of base closings.

At minimum one can give Perry props for doing his own talking and not hiring outside lobbyists to do his pitch. Perhaps it's more accurate to commend Perry for firing the outside lobbyist that once was hired to promote Texas interests on Capitol Hill.

That lobbyist was former House Majority Leader Arlen Specter — only enough, the author of the base closing process

2005 Base Realignment and Closure Commission deadlines

■ March 15: The final list of nine commission members submitted by the president and congressional leaders goes to the Senate for consideration and confirmation. Three members are nominated by the president, two each are suggested by the speaker of the House and the Senate majority leader, with one each from the House and Senate minority leaders.

■ May 16: Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld will submit to the BRAC Commission a list of bases that the department has selected for closure or realignment.

■ By Sept. 8: The BRAC Commission reports to the president on its recommendations.

■ By Sept. 23: The president approves or disapproves the list. The president cannot overturn major changes to the BRAC Commission's list.

■ If President Bush approves the list, the decision takes effect 45 legislative days after it is submitted to Congress. To change the list, each chamber must adopt and the president must sign a joint resolution of disapproval.

■ If Bush disapproves of the list, the BRAC Commission has until Oct. 20 to submit a revision. The president then would have until Nov. 7 to approve the list.

■ If Bush sends a second list to Congress, the same rules apply. The recommendations become law 45 days after the president sends the list to Congress unless both chambers pass and Bush signs a resolution of disapproval.

when he was still in Congress.

Army's firm, Piper Rudnick LLP, had a \$15,000-a-month contract with the state until Perry found out it also had a \$50,000-a-month contract to represent Florida on base closing issues.

"Remember what these lobbyists are going to do," Spencer said. "They come around to communities and say, 'Your base is going to be closed unless you pay me to represent you.' That will or won't happen regardless of what the lobbyist does. Of course, if it's not closed, the lobbyist will take full credit for it."

"Hopefully, any particular base will be closed or remain open on its own merit," he said. "The commission will look at it purely from a national security perspective, on what the base brings to the nation's security."

Jobs, not national security, were on Texas lawmakers' minds when they introduced a bill this month that would let communities use taxes earmarked for economic development to enhance infrastructure around bases. Yet this job-protection effort may be too little, too late.

"The data are all in to support the closure decisions," Beeks said. "They are so far down that road that if you built a superhighway straight to the CO's door, you still couldn't influence the outcome of this decision."

State leaders would better serve their constituents at this point by focusing on improvements that will serve their communities post-BRAC.

Pause for collective gasp here. What many elected leaders have an almost impossible liability to recognize is that BRAC is not a guaranteed death knell for a community's economic health.

"The hardest thing to convince people of — and it only happens after they've been through the process — is that there is life after BRAC," Beeks said.

"It is a wrenching process but, if commu-

nities will come together and form reuse committees, the Defense Department will help with money and other money available through the Commerce Department."

"Economies become more diversified, stronger and more immune to cyclical ups and downs in defense budgets. They become 21st century economies rather than 20th century industry economy that grows up around a base," Beeks said.

Beeks cites K.J. Sawyer Air Force Base in Michigan's Upper Peninsula as a great example of how a much-condemned closure in 1995 turned into an economic development success story.

A state-of-the-art lumber mill began operating in the old weapons storage area in 1997. The Marquette County airport had moved to the site by 1999. A company that performs aircraft maintenance for American Eagleline is located there.

By 2001, all of the property that had been owned by the Air Force at the old Strategic Air Command facility was transferred to the county, which identified the area as the Marquette County Renaissance Zone.

In April 2004, Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm announced \$350,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding to help B3 Computers develop a production facility that would employ 110 people at the former air base.

Granholm joined every other governor in a state with military facilities in appointing a brass-heavy task force that will fight to keep remaining bases off the BRAC list in 2005.

"BRAC isn't that 'five stages of death' thing, but it's close," said Beeks. "Right now, everyone is in denial. Politically, I don't see how a mayor or governor doesn't do it. Realistically, it's a waste of money."

"If only they could be strong enough to stand up and say: 'Let's work to see what we could do with this if the base is gone.'"

Jill "J.R." Labbe is a senior editorial writer and columnist for the Fort Worth (Texas) Star-Telegram.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



Backing Boone road

KY PIKEVILLE — A Kentucky congressman whose name took the place of Daniel Boone's on a prominent mountain highway is endorsing a proposal to rename another highway after the famous frontiersman.

U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers said he wants U.S. 25E to be renamed the Daniel Boone Wilderness Road, a move that would appease Boone's descendants, who were offended when state officials renamed the Daniel Boone Parkway for Rogers.

"That was done without my knowledge," Rogers said. "It was a surprise to me. But they have named various parkways throughout the state for people in public life ... and I was honored."

Alleged rapist sniffed out

MA QUINCY — A restaurant manager accused of raping an employee at knifepoint was arrested after the woman told police she knew her masked attacker was her boss because of his bad breath.

Then "Dickie" Lee, 36, of Quincy, pleaded innocent in district court to charges including three counts of aggravated rape. He was ordered held on \$100,000 bail.

Lee was arrested eight days after the Feb. 3 incident, based on DNA evidence that tied him to the crime scene, police said.

Police said they focused on Lee when the victim told them she recognized the attacker from his breath odor.

Fake passports seized

OH CINCINNATI — Fake passports created by an Austrian artist for a contemporary museum exhibit were confiscated at an airport after a customs agent thought they might be harmful if imported, government and museum officials said.

"I think it says a lot about the condition of our world today, that everyone is understandably on the alert," said Contemporary Arts Center director Linda Shearer.

The items were supposed to be included in the museum's exhibit titled "State of Sabotage," which focuses on government or corporate power over the individual, Shearer said.

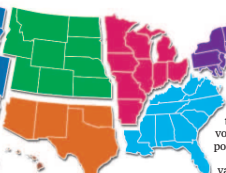
Ex-lawmen charged

TX HOUSTON — Two former jailers and a man who once worked for the constable's office have been accused of robbing and threatening to arrest prospective customers of women posing as prostitutes.

The suspects have been charged with engaging in organized criminal activity in a conspiracy to commit robbery.

Murphy L. Randall, 36, and Undre Skinner, 40, worked as jailers at sheriff's headquarters in Richmond. Yusuf West, 28, once worked for the Harris County Precinct 6 Constable's office.

Harris County Assistant District Attorney Joe Owmby said the scheme centered on a Houston apartment complex where Randall and Skinner worked second jobs as security guards. He said the scheme went on from June to about November.



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

"In most of the cases, they took whatever cash these guys had and said they weren't going to take them to jail this time," Owmby said.

Stabbing sentence

NY NEW YORK — A man trained in a Filipino knife-fighting technique was sentenced to 17 years in prison for fatally stabbing a nightclub bouncer who tried to enforce the city's indoor smoking ban.

Isaiah Umali — who was convicted in November of first-degree manslaughter in the April 2003 death of Dana "Shazam" Blake — had faced up to 25 years in prison.

State Supreme Court Justice Bonnie Witrner said the 6-inch serrated knife Umali used on Blake, 32, was "the deadliest knife I've ever seen in a courtroom. There can be no other purpose but to injure or kill somebody."

Illegal driving legalities

UT SALT LAKE CITY — The Utah Senate voted to take driver's licenses away from people who cannot prove they are legal U.S. residents and issue them a driving "privilege" card instead.

Lawmakers voted 18-8 to approve the measure, which goes next to the House. Gov. Jon Hunts-

man said that he would support it.

Senators said they were alarmed by an investigation that found 58,000 undocumented workers had Utah driver's licenses and that some non-citizens were able to use the licenses to register to vote and cast ballots at the polls.

"It's scary, being taken advantage of," Republican state Sen. Gregory Bell said. "Once they get a Utah driver's license, it's a platform for everything else."

Gang shooting law waits

VA RICHMOND — Legislation that would subject street gang members to the death penalty for carrying out gang-ordered shootings likely will await next year's session after a Senate panel deferred action.

The bill, intended to deter savage, deadly attacks of gangs such as MS-13 proliferating in Virginia, was referred to the state Crime Commission for study on a unanimous Courts of Justice Committee voice vote.

Del. David Albo said his bill essentially would treat a killing ordered by a gang chieftain as murder-for-hire, making the killer and the person who ordered it eligible for execution.

Presently, gang-directed killings are not subject to capital punishment.

Lobster disease spreads

RI NARRAGANSETT — More lobsters are contracting shell disease, and the problem has spread from southern New England waters all the way to Maine, scientists said at a symposium analyzing a phenomenon that has mysteriously afflicted the industry in recent years.

Shell disease now affects 30 percent of lobsters in coastal areas of southern New England and Long Island Sound, according to researchers. It's still unclear what's causing the disease, researchers said, and what's causing it to spread.

The disease does not taint the lobsters' meat, but makes shells so unsightly that they are too unappealing to serve whole. It can weaken lobsters so much that they prematurely die, though experts don't have any concrete figures.

Prank 911 calls

RI ST. LOUIS — A teenager has been accused of using a stolen cell phone to swamp dispatchers with hundreds of bogus 911 calls over a matter of weeks, at times talking of killing some of the responding officers he could see.

The 15-year-old boy sometimes was such a nuisance he called in new emergencies at the same address where officers already were standing. St. Louis County Police spokesman Mason Keller said.

Such was the case when the young culprit was tracked down only after dispatchers fielded 25 bogus calls within 75 minutes to the same area where the officer already had arrived, Keller said.

The boy has been referred to St. Louis County Family Court, where information on possible charges was not immediately available. He was not identified because he is charged as a juvenile.

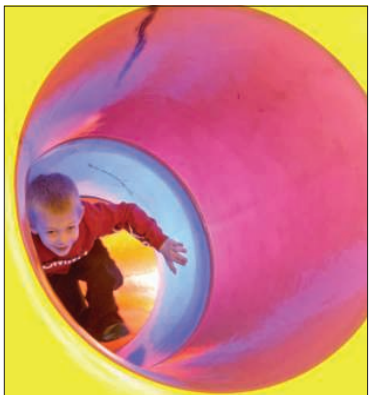


Charitable kisses Steven Walker, principal of Dover Elementary School in Pennsylvania, kisses a pig to fulfill his promise to the students for reaching their fund-raising goal for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. The children raised more than \$4,000 in their "Giving from the Heart" campaign.



Winter shield

Erma Hernandez walks across Fayette Street in downtown Syracuse, N.Y., shielding her son, Jacon Ramos, 3, from the snow with an umbrella.



Tubular fun

Park in Pittsburgh, Kan.

Zach Uttley, 5, climbs upward through a slipper-slide tunnel while playing in Leffler Rotary



Teamwork Abigail Martinez, 10, left, holds the water fountain faucet as Vicky Becerra, 8, center, holds up her sister, Connie Becerra, 5, at the Mesilla Plaza in Mesilla, N.M.



Wrestling pretzel Cody Martin of Forbush High School in East Bend ties up Brett Williams, bottom, of North Henderson High School in Hendersonville during their 130-pound match at the Class 1A-2A North Carolina High School Athletic Association wrestling championships in Winston-Salem, N.C.



Vintage beauty Rick Ziel, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., shines up a B-17 bomber at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport.



Taking a break Jesse Corwin, 16, pauses while teaching a swimming class at a city pool in Great Falls, Mont.

Body parts found

NY NEW YORK — The human remains found by a transit worker in a Brooklyn subway tunnel belonged to a 19-year-old man, police said.

The body parts — two legs severed just below the torso — had been stuffed in a plastic bag, said police spokesman Detective Eric Crisafi.

The remains belonged to Rashawn Brazell of Brooklyn, Crisafi said.

The investigation is ongoing, Crisafi said.

Teacher arrested

FL ORLANDO — A high school chemistry teacher was arrested after students claimed he taught his class how to make a bomb, authorities said.

David Pieski used an overhead projector in class to give instructions in making explosives to students at Freedom High School, including advising them to use an electric detonator to stay clear from the blast, an Orange County sheriff's arrest report said.

In Pieski's classroom in Orlando, authorities found a book labeled "Demo," which includes the chemical breakdown for a powerful explosive, the arrest report said.

Pieski was charged with possessing or discharging a destructive device and culpable negligence. Pieski, who was booked into the Orange County Jail and released on \$1,000 bail, declined to comment.

Listerine DUI

MI ADRIAN — A woman who pleaded guilty to driving while drunk on three glasses of Listerine was sentenced to two years of probation.

Officials suspected Carol Ries, 50, was intoxicated after her rear-ended another vehicle at a red light in January. Police found a bottle of the mouthwash in her car. She passed one breath test, but failed another that used different equipment. Her blood alcohol level was .30 percent, more than three times the legal limit.

According to Listerine manufacturer Pfizer Inc.'s Web site, original formula Listerine contains 26.9 percent alcohol, more than four times that of many malt liquors, while other varieties contain 21.6 percent alcohol.

Man suspected of abuse

TX MIDLAND — A Midland man faces child endangerment charges on accusations that he chained a 4-year-old boy by the neck and held a knife to his older brother's neck, authorities said.

Thomas Mitchell Lynskey, 31, is accused of harming his girlfriend's two sons in November, Midland County sheriff's investigator Rick Rowland said.

Lynskey surrendered to authorities after learning of an arrest warrant and was released on \$10,000 bond the same day.

Elk to roam free

CA LOS BANOS — Dozens of tule elk will be sent to areas where they can roam freely, from the northern Coast Ranges to the southern Sierra Nevada, in an attempt to restore a native California species that has rebounded from

the brink of extinction.

"We were down to an Adam and an Eve, for all we know," said Jon Fischer, head of the elk capture project for the California Department of Fish and Game. "This has been a real success story."

Tule elk exist only in California, where they once roamed the San Joaquin Valley and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Focus on asbestos

MT LIBBY — They're getting ready for the Asbestos Health Fair in this old mining town.

Posters promise "Door Prizes!" and "Blood draw to participate in ongoing research!" Companies that sell home oxygen supplies will send reps. Doctors and researchers will be here.

There will be consultants to help asbestosis victims apply for public aid. And there will be advice on finding help with the housework when the disease becomes too much.

To visitors to the town of some 8,000 people, it all must seem surreal. To the locals, this has, sadly, become part of life in Libby.

Asbestos released into the air from the now-closed W.R. Grace and Co. vermiculite mine just down the road is blamed by some health authorities for killing some 200 people and sickening one of every eight residents.

A federal grand jury indicted the company and seven executives, accusing them of conspiring for decades to hide the danger. Grace has denied any criminal wrongdoing and said it looks forward to "setting the record straight" in court.

For many in town, the indictments mean those responsible will finally be held accountable.

Recruiting tennis fans

AZ SCOTTSDALE — NHL fans left on the sidelines can get the jump on a new game: tennis.

Hockey fans who show up for the first two days of the ATP Tour event wearing Phoenix Coyotes hockey jerseys will be given free tickets for the tennis tournament.

The Tennis Channel announced its offer to hockey fans. The first 500 people wearing a Coyotes jersey to the day or night sessions at the tournament can claim a free ticket at the will-call window.

"With their new free time, hockey fans can come see the spectacular athleticism, finesse and artistry happening right now in big-time tennis," Bellamy said in a statement.

Court spares dog's life

NE LINCOLN — The state Supreme Court granted clemency to a dog sentenced to death for fighting with a neighbor's pet.

The high court ruled that Murphy, an Alaskan malamute-shepherd mix belonging to Doug and Lorelei Dittoe, should not be killed for causing "relatively minor injury" to the other dog after slipping out of the couple's fenced-in yard in 2001.

Murphy had been deemed dangerous by the county sheriff, and a judge ordered her destroyed.

Now, the Dittoes are planning a party for Murphy.

"She might just get a steak," Lorelei Dittoe said.

Stories and photos from wire services

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated sports listings are available on the first Scoreboard page in the sports section or AFRTS Web site at <http://myafn.dodmedia.mil/>

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2005

	AFN-FAMILY	AFN-MOVIE	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	AFN-SPORTS	SPECTRUM	AFN-PACIFIC
9:00	Movie *** "Jimmy Neutron: Boy Genius" (2001) Voices of Megan Cavanagh.	Movie *** "Young Mr. Lincoln" (1930) Henry F. Lind.	Dr. Phil	Jeopardy!	The Bellamy Boys	Sports	30-Minute Meals	Jeopardy!
10:00	Dave the Barbarian	John Ford account of Henry's early legal career.	(9:46) Oprah Winfrey	Headline News	Fox News Watch	Bulls and Bears	Paula's Home Cooking	Headline News
10:30	Dave the Barbarian	(10:50) Movie *** "Mr. DeSoto" (1990). Comedy James Belushi. A stranger gives a man a chance to change his fate.	(3:30) Guiding Light	Headline News	Caruso on Business	Forbes	Designers' Challenge	ESPNNews
11:00	Dave the Barbarian		(17) General Hospital	90 Minutes	Cashin 'n'	The King of Queens	Fashion Emergency	Pacific Report
11:30	Dave the Barbarian		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'	Datin' NBC		Life is Great-Snooki Burke	90 Minutes
12:00	Dave the Barbarian		Judge Judy	Without a Trace 'Life Rules'	Fox and Friends		The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'
12:30	Dave the Barbarian	Movie *** "Before Sunrise" (1995). Drama: Ewan McGregor. Two young travelers share a whirlwind romance in Vienna.	(17) Diagnosing, treating autism: cerebral cancer.	Without a Trace 'Life Rules'	Fox and Friends		Charmed "Blinked by the Whirlpools"	Without a Trace 'Life Rules'
13:00	Dave the Barbarian		Headline News	Pacific Report	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Strong Medicine: Aester Molar has an addiction to Ritalin.	Pacific Report
13:30	Adventure! Erik von Detten, Christina Davis, Patrick Davis.	(2:51) Movie *** "Mighty Joe Young" (1998). Adventure: Charlize Theron, Bill Paxton, Brad Sherrod.	Aladdin	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	American Morning		Any Day Now 'That's Our Son, Bobby'	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno
14:00	Adventure! Erik von Detten, Christina Davis, Patrick Davis.		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'	CNN Live Today		Third Watch 'True Love'	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'
14:30	Adventure! Erik von Detten, Christina Davis, Patrick Davis.		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'	SportsCenter		Law & Order 'Amends'	The Late Late Show With Craig Ferguson
15:00	Funnies Home Videos		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'	NFL Countdown		The Simpsons	Dennis Miller
15:30	Full House (Part 1 of 2)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Everybody Loves Raymond	Countdown With Keith Urban
16:00	Full House (Part 2 of 2)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			The Dead Zone 'Looking Glass' Turns try to use Johnny	Access Hollywood
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh! "Alternath"		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Law & Order 'Mortimer'	Headline News
17:00	Doug (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Caribbean Workout	Entertainment Studios.com
17:30	The Wild Thornberrys		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Monster House A 1970s disco inspired theme.	The Hot List
18:00	The Fairly OddParents		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Friends	Headline News
18:30	Rugrats		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Get & Go	Good Morning America
19:00	Lizzie McGuire		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Around the Horn	Headline News
19:30	Faina 'Far Factors'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'			Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date
20:00	Smallville 'Red'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
20:30	Boy Meets World		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
21:00	Boy Meets World		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
21:30	The Cosby Show		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
22:00	Home Improvement		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
22:30	Touched by an Angel 'Voice of an Angel'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
23:00	Touched by an Angel 'Voice of an Angel'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
00:00	AAahh! Real Monsters		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
00:30	Rocky Power		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
01:00	The Fairly OddParents		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
1:00	Rugrats		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
2:00	Lizzie McGuire		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
2:30	Faina 'Far Factors'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
3:00	Smallville 'Red'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
3:30	Boy Meets World		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
4:00	Boy Meets World		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
4:30	Boy Meets World		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
5:00	Sesame Street (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
5:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
6:00	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
6:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
7:00	Dragon Tales (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
7:30	Bob the Builder		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
8:00	The Veggie		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
8:30	Dora the Explorer		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
9:00	Stanley 'Little Dog Lost'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
9:30	Sagwa-Sagwa (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
10:00	Arthur (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
10:30	Reading Rainbow (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
11:00	Sagwa-Sagwa (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
11:30	Stanley 'Penguin Party'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
12:00	Dora the Explorer		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
12:30	The Wiggles		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
13:00	Bob the Builder		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
13:30	Dragon Tales (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
14:00	Blue's Clues (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
14:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
15:00	Funnies Home Videos		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
15:30	Full House		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
16:00	Pokemon: Slotted ball.		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh!		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
17:00	Doug (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
17:30	The Wild Thornberrys		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
18:00	The Fairly OddParents		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
18:30	Rugrats: Jonathan babybats.		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
19:00	The Proud Family (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
19:30	The Proud Family (E)		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
20:00	Everwood: "Extra Ordinary"		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
20:30	Sister, Sister		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
21:00	Sister, Sister		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
21:30	The Cosby Show		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
22:00	Home Improvement		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
22:30	Touched by an Angel 'The Truth and Nothing but...'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				
23:00	Touched by an Angel 'The Truth and Nothing but...'		Headline News	Without a Trace 'Hawks and Handcuffs'				

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FACES



Will Smith, left, and Kevin James appear in a scene from the movie "Hitch," directed by Andy Tennant. When Smith suggested to his golf buddy James that they should work together, the "King of Queens" star figured it was one of those when-pigs-fly situations.

James steals limelight

Actor improvises moves in new flick

BY CHRIS HEWITT

Knight Ridder Newspapers

Usher has crunking, Michael Jackson has the moonwalk and Kevin James has the Q-Tip.

James is in "Hitch," which is about a romance coach for the dateless played by Will Smith.

But, for about five minutes, "Hitch" is hijacked by the James Klutzonic Dance Machine.

His character demonstrates his pathetic dance moves for Smith, including an ear-fingering gesture called the Q-Tip and a hand-rubbing motion called Starting the Fire.

All are rejected.

"You just look at me, and you know I can throw it down, right? Me and getting the ladies — you can see how smooth I am," jokes James, star of TV's "The King of Queens," calling from a New York hotel.

"Those are pretty much my own moves, which is pretty sad. That was my calling card with the ladies, back in the day. That was what I had to work with — that out-of-control thing, sort of like onions falling out of a bag."

Smith and James improvised the dance scene (they did lots of stuff that's not in the movie but could be on the DVD), so Jimmy James says many stars wouldn't go for.

"Some actors would see another supporting actor getting laughs and would shut it down immediately," says James, declining

to name names. "But Will encouraged it." The two were friends first, after a "Queens" writer introduced them and they played golf.

Smith said they should work together; James figured it was one of those when-pigs-fly situations.

But Smith called and James said yes to a tiny role that, over the course of a movie's worth of improvised scenes, ended up being not-so-tiny.

James was thrilled because, despite six years on a hit sitcom, the movie offers were not exactly pouring in.

They weren't exactly even trickling in.

"It's hard to knock down doors, even if you've been on a TV show for a while," says James. "It's such a difficult transition to make, as you can tell from all the TV actors who tried and didn't make it in movies."

When James heard from Smith, he had just lost the lead in the next film from Mike Judge, who wrote and directed "Office Space."

At the time, he was bummed not to get the gig. Now, he's thrilled he wasn't chosen because it would have prevented him from doing "Hitch."

Speaking about his collaboration with Smith, James uses the playing-against-someone-who's-better-than-you-makes-you-better sports metaphor.

The difference is, when he says working with Smith is the comedy equivalent of playing golf with Tiger Woods, James isn't

speaking metaphorically.

He actually has played golf with Tiger Woods, and tips from Woods actually did make him better. Same goes for Smith, who helped him figure out the whole movie thing.

With "Hitch" heading into theaters, "King of Queens" about to wrap shooting for the season and a couple of movies already completed (including a comedy that pairs him with mentor Ray Romano), James is looking at what's next. He's not sure what it'll be, but it's a good bet it will find him playing a character unlike the ones in "Queens" and "Hitch," both of whom are lovable, self-deprecating klutzes.

"Rob Burnett, the producer of 'Letterman,' told me you watch a movie for two reasons. Either it's like a James Bond movie, where you see

him do things you'll never do, or it's a character actor's a lot like you, so you relate to him," says James.

"That's more what I've been doing, but, believe me, my agents and everybody are going. 'We need to go in a different direction. Let's do something where Kevin is not the fat guy, tripping over his suitcase.' Even if James stays vertical for the entire film, don't expect him to be too suave."

"The way I look at it is when you expose yourself to America and beyond, like I do on 'King of Queens,' where the humiliating stuff is often part of what's funny or endearing about the character, I have no problem with that," says James. "It's good to show you have faults and you look like an idiot some of the time, because we all do."

Rock OK with Oscar's delay

First-time Oscar host Chris Rock, a comedian known for his frequent use of expletives, says the five-second decency delay on the ABC show's Feb. 27 telecast will be a welcome "safety net."

"I've been on TV and been funny not cursing," Rock says in an interview on CBS' "60 Minutes" newsmagazine.

"As far as content is concerned, I will talk about the movies. I'm not really worried about it. I'm sure ABC is more worried about it than me."

Gil Cates, the producer of the Oscar show, has expressed confidence in Rock, who suggested in a recent Entertainment Weekly magazine interview that no straight black men watch the telecast.

"[A time delay is] a safety net. You know, you're a trapeze artist ... you welcome the net," Rock says.

Rock also says that when he arrives on Oscar night, he may be traveling "small," without an entourage. The 39-year-old actor-comedian says that "with a posse, you're not letting the real world in. And if you don't let the real world in, you're not going to be funny."

He added: "Donald Trump rolls pretty small, you know."



Rock

Third son for Beckhams

David Beckham's wife Victoria — formerly known as "Posh Spice" — gave birth Sunday in Madrid, Spain, to the couple's third son.

"We've got a baby boy, his name is Cruz, that's C-r-u-z. He's beautiful and he's in there with his brothers," Beckham said.

Asked about the name — Spanish for the word "cross," Beckham replied, "It's just name we like. We found it hard this time but we found a name we liked and stuck with it."

Beckham said the couple had been advised to go to the hospital Saturday night and that the baby was delivered a week early.

Life inside Windsor Castle

Britain's royal family has given a TV crew unprecedented access to Windsor Castle for a documentary series about life in the royal household.

Buckingham Palace said Thursday that a team from production company RDF had been filming at the castle, west of London, for a year. The three-part series, tentatively titled, "Windsor," and due to be broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corp. next fall, includes an interview with Prince Philip and several scenes featuring Queen Elizabeth II.

A palace spokeswoman said Philip would speak about his role as a ranger for the castle's extensive grounds and parks.

Spears: Photos invade privacy

Britney Spears says the veil has been lifted on her honeymoon, and she's not happy.

Photos of Spears and her new husband, Kevin Federline, are on the cover of US Weekly magazine under the headline: "Britney's Private Album!" Other pictures of the couple's October honeymoon in the Fiji Islands are displayed on five pages inside the magazine, on newsstands Friday.

"Kevin and I chose a resort location where we were promised absolute privacy and seclusion," the 23-year-old pop star said.

"Other magazines, including Star, contacted us when presented with these photographs and refused to publish them," said Spears.

"Kevin and I thank those other magazines for respecting our rights of privacy."

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



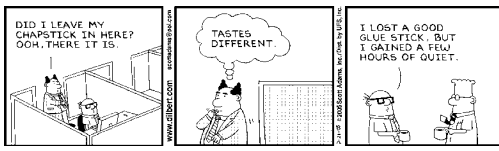
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



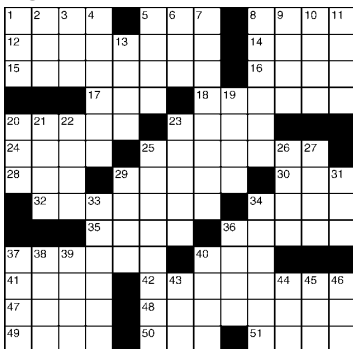
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Love (Lat.)
- 5 Cranberry territory
- 8 Fizz precursor?
- 12 Labyrinth beast
- 14 Ethereal
- 15 Opening night
- 16 Approach
- 17 Apiece
- 18 Small lump
- 20 This list
- 23 Judicial garb
- 24 Contain
- 25 "Pretty Woman" star
- 28 Charged bit
- 29 With 23-Down, bakery buses
- 30 "Undeniably"
- 32 Due
- 34 St. Louis landmark

Down

- 1 Pump up the volume
- 2 Orbiter until 2001
- 3 Undivided
- 4 Coveted
- 5 Boxer Max
- 6 "— Town"
- 7 1968 Olympics city
- 8 Cater to the masses
- 9 Stead
- 10 Exam format
- 11 Burning heap
- 13 Neckwear
- 19 Do as you're told
- 20 Greek X
- 21 Aerobic maneuver

22 Arm bone

- 23 See 29-Across
- 25 Debater's answer
- 26 Novice
- 27 Denomination
- 29 Tarzan's wife
- 31 "— Stoops to Conquer"
- 33 Dairy-case item
- 34 Special vocabularies
- 36 Marries
- 37 Smile broadly
- 38 Bruins' sch.
- 39 "Phoebe!"
- 40 Recognize
- 43 Gorilla
- 44 Flamenco cheer
- 45 On pension (Abbr.)
- 46 Somewhat (Suff.)

Answer to Previous Puzzle



2-21

CRYPTOQUIP

C VKIOO UDI TAYEF'O
OILAPF-HIOU TYCUCPV
CBGEIBIPU LAKEF HI

LXEEIF UDI GIP KEUCBXUI.
Saturday's Cryptoquip: IF A RECENTLY MARRIED MAN SLEEPS AT A HOTEL, COULD HE BE PAYING FOR GROOM AND BOARD?

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals S

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or EMAIL: adams@mail.estrupes.osd.mil

Attorneys 886

FSL Attorney Joe Mais
U.S. & German Divorces
Employment & Personal Injury
Tax, Probate, Trusts, and/or Disputes
email: mais@hd-law.de
Office: Heidelberg Tel: 06221-727-9595

LAW OFFICES JOSEPH K. KELSO
U.S. Attorney at Law
Specializing in U.S. Federal
Employment Law, Administrative Boards,
Personal Injury and Medical Malpractice, Tort
Claims, International Contracts and
Immigration Law.
Dormstädter Landstraße 19A, 69126 Frankfurt am Main
Tel: (06180) 79 79 79 Fax: (06180) 79 96 22

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Sexson reports early to camp to discuss DUI

The Associated Press

Richie Sexson checked into the Seattle Mariners' spring training camp two days early Saturday, knowing he'd have to explain a Feb. 5 drunken driving citation.

"It's an unfortunate situation," said Sexson, who has pleaded not guilty. "I'm disappointed. No. 1 in myself. You want to apologize to every fan you've ever had, every fan you're going to have or fans you're going to lose."

Sexson, who signed a \$50 million, four-year contract, was stopped a quarter-mile from his home near Vancouver, Wash. That day, he had been at his brother's home, where he had two beers with a chicken dinner.

Shooting home, however, a Clark County sheriff's deputy stopped Sexson after estimating his speed at 50 mph in a 35-mph zone, though Sexson ultimately wasn't cited for speeding.

The deputy smelled a "strong odor of intoxicants," according to a sheriff's report, and noticed empty beer bottles in the vehicle. Sexson said the bottles were left a week earlier after another visit to his brother's home.

He received a citation for suspicion of DUI, Sexson said, because he refused to take a portable breath test at the scene.

"If you refuse a Breathalyzer (test) in the field, automatically they can charge you with driving under the influence," Sexson said.

Sexson said he was transported to the sheriff's office, taking two breath tests about 45 minutes later. Both tests registered under Washington's legal threshold for intoxication.

At Fort Myers, Fla., Edgar Renteria spent his first day at season camp. The new Red Sox shortstop made the last out for the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series, when he grounded to pitcher Keith



New Boston Red Sox shortstop Edgar Renteria fields a grounder after reporting to spring training camp a day early on Saturday in Ft. Myers, Fla.

Foulke and ended Boston's four-game sweep.

Renteria, who replaced Orlando Cabrera, plans to be on hand when his new teammates get their championship rings.

"I'm going to go through the line for mine, too, and then I'll say, 'Where's my ring?'" Renteria said, apparently joking. At Vero Beach, Fla., pitcher Brad Penny didn't throw during the Los Angeles Dodgers' first workout. Penny, sustained a rare nerve injury to his right biceps that sidelined him late last season, met with team staff to plan his schedule.

"We are shooting for a bullpen session for Brad sometime early to midweek," manager Jim Tracy said.

Penny probably would have been ready

to throw off the mound had he not spent the last two weeks fighting the flu.

"I'll be ready for the season by April," he said. "I'm excited about it."

At Jupiter, Fla., Florida Marlins right-hander A.J. Burnett was about to begin his first bullpen session of spring training when he shouted a friendly warning to fans standing behind the 8-foot-high backstop.

"Heads up," he said. "Last year I nearly crushed somebody. You guys look out."

Unlike a year ago, when Burnett hit a female spectator on the shoulder with an errant practice pitch, he threw for 10 minutes without sailing a single fastball over the fence.

Manager Jack McKeon emerged from

the clubhouse in the morning to begin his 57th year in professional baseball and was greeted by a phalanx of photographers.

"Get my good side, please," he said. Right-hander Juan Cruz didn't report to the Athletics on Saturday with the rest of the pitchers and catchers. The team said he was taking a few extra days in his native Dominican Republic and would be in camp Monday.

Cruz lost to the A's in salary arbitration Tuesday. He will get \$600,000 instead of the \$860,000 he had requested. Acquired from Atlanta by Tim Lincecum in December, Cruz was 6-2 with a 2.75 ERA in 50 relief outings last season, when he made \$370,000.

About a half dozen Japanese reporters showed up in Phoenix to speak to new Oakland pitcher Keiichi Yabu, but Yabu wasn't due to arrive in Arizona until late Saturday.

In Fort Myers, Fla., Boston reliever Mike Timlin understands why Yankees manager Joe Torre won't bring a lot of regulars for the March 7 split-season game at the Red Sox.

"It's not a rivalry thing. He's not dishing us by any means," Timlin said. "Joe's not that way. He's building the best team that he possibly can with what he has."

At Bradenton, Fla., Pittsburgh left-hander Oliver Perez has not pitched during the first two days of workouts because of stiffness in his throwing shoulder. The shoulder tightness stems from sleeping the wrong way Thursday night.

"Everything is fine," Perez said. "I'm just a little tired in the shoulder."

In Tucson, Ariz., Colorado pitcher Shawn Chacon worked out, happy to be back in the starting rotation after becoming the first pitcher in major league history with 20 saves and an ERA over 7.00 "I don't regret the decision to switch last year," said Chacon, who had went 1-9 with a 7.11 ERA and nine blown saves. "I tried it all, and in my God, I said to him, 'What have you been doing?' " "Shhh," he said. "Don't tell anybody."

Boone's physique.

"I hit a double, and when I got out there to second base, I got a good look at Boone," Canseco wrote. "I couldn't believe my eyes. He was enormous."

"Oh, my God," I said to him. "What have you been doing?" "Shhh," he said. "Don't tell anybody."

"Whispers like that were a sign that you were part of the club — the bond of a secret code or handshake," wrote Canseco, who admitted to steroid use and said he introduced other major leaguers to the drug.

In the week since transcripts of the book were released, several news outlets have documented that Canseco never reached second base in spring training games against the Mariners in 2001.

Giants' closer Nen opts for retirement after setback

The Associated Press

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Robb Nen tried as hard as anyone to extend his career as one of baseball's best closers, working countless hours to rehabilitate his troublesome shoulder after three operations.

Following yet another setback, the former Giants pitcher has decided to retire.

"He tried and got close again, and fell back down," San Francisco trainer Stan Conte said Sunday, a day after speaking to Nen about the decision. "It's been so frustrating. I'm surprised he lasted this long."

Nen, who had 43 saves and a 2.20 ERA in 2002 to help the Giants reach the World Series, hasn't pitched in more than two



needed surgery and that he was risking further damage.

The Giants fell six outs short of a championship. Nen said he has no regrets.

"What he did to stay on the field in 2002, he jeopardized his career," lefty reliever Jason Christiansen said Sunday. "He put the team above himself. Everybody who was here in 2002 has so much respect for what he did. If it hadn't been for him, we wouldn't have gone to the World Series."

The 35-year-old Nen, a tenacious right-hander who spent his final five seasons with the Giants, had been hopeful of giving it another shot this season — even if he had to earn a non-roster invite to spring training with another club. The Colorado Rockies were one of the teams monitoring his progress to see if he was healthy.

Still, Nen hasn't ruled out a return down the road if his arm were to somehow recover, though that seems unlikely. Nen has 314 career saves in 10 major league seasons and is one of 18 pitchers to reach the 300 mark.

Nen's rotator cuff is torn — perhaps as much as 75 percent — but surgery to completely repair it has a very low success rate. And Nen doesn't want to go through an-

other operation.

Boone denies Canseco claims

PEORIA, Ariz. — Seattle Mariners second baseman Bret Boone on Saturday denied an allegation by former slugger Jose Canseco, in his best-selling book, that Boone used steroids four years ago.

"I don't know the person. He doesn't know me. I've never had a conversation with him. As far as I'm concerned, it's absolutely ridiculous," Boone said after reporting to Seattle's spring training camp.

In one chapter of Canseco's book, he described playing for the Anaheim Angels during a spring training game against the Mariners in 2001 and marveling at

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Aggiat headache

Air Force can't cope with Utah's 7-footer; Navy edges Lehigh; Army loses 21st game

The Associated Press

AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — The winning streak marches on and the conference title belongs to Utah. Pretty soon, it will be tournament time and the Utes look like a team that could do some damage there, as well.

Andrew Bogut scored 20 of his 23 points in the second half Saturday to lead No. 14 Utah to its 18th straight victory, a 65-56 defeat of Air Force that clinched the Mountain West Conference championship.

"To have a day where you accomplish the main goal of your season, I'd say it ranks right up there at the top," first-year Utes coach Ray Giacoletti said.

In what may have been the most impressive victory of a streak which began Dec. 17, the Utes (23-3, 11-0) snapped Air Force's 24-game home winning streak. Utah needs three more victories to become the first team to run the table in the 6-year-old MWC. Either way, they are well on track for their 26th NCAA tournament appearance.

"Our number-one goal was winning a conference championship," Giacoletti said. "We said if we do that, we'll stop and put another goal on the table. We'll probably have a chance to look at that tomorrow."

Air Force (15-10, 6-4), ranked 104 in the latest RPI ratings, lost a chance at the quality victory it clearly needed to make the NCAA tournament for the second straight year. The Falcons, who came with a half-game lead over Wyoming for second place, now fight for seeding for the conference tournament, which they very well

may have to win if they are to head back to the NCAA.

"Right now, the postseason isn't necessarily important to us," first-year coach Chris Mooney said. "We've just got to concentrate on (Monday's opponent) BYU and the road trip" that follows.

Jacob Buttschi had 15 points for the Falcons, but none in the second half when Utah's defense firmed up and Bogut started taking over on both ends of the floor.

The 7-foot Australia native came one rebound short of padding his nation-leading total of 17 double-doubles. He scored eight points during a 10-0 run that gave Utah a 36-32 lead and set the tone to open the second half.

The Utes stayed more patient in getting him the ball, and when they did, Bogut typically had his defender sealed and made an easy spin move for a bucket.

"It's very frustrating," Mooney said. "You're not going to hold him to six points, we realize that. But when the ball got into him, it was too easy."

On defense, meanwhile, Bogut altered shots and generally frustrated Air Force, which by using its typical slowdown style played right into the big man's hands.

Trailing 53-45 with about 3 minutes left, Bogut altered Nick Welch's shot, then blocked Dan Nwaeleke's attempt after the rebound. It was a typical sequence for the Utes, who allowed only three field goals over the first 15 minutes of the second half.

"I haven't been part of a team that's played this kind of team defense before," guard Marc Jackson said. "That's why we've had this kind of success."

Utah's 15 points and 15 rebounds and Jackson had 12 for Utah, whose winning streak is second only to Illinois' 27.



Utah's Andrew Bogut rips a rebound away from Air Force's Dan Nwaeleke during the second half of Saturday's game at the Air Force Academy. No. 14 Utah beat Air Force 65-56.

Welch also had 15 points for the Falcons, whose last home loss came March 3, 2003, to Utah.

Navy 76, Lehigh 75: Matt Fannin scored 16 points and Taj Matthews had 15 as Navy (8-17, 4-8 Patriot League) held off a comeback by Lehigh (13-12, 7-5) at Bethlehem, Pa. Corey Johnson had 13 points, George O'Garro scored 11 and David Hooper added 10 for Navy. Jose Olivero scored 23 for Lehigh.

Navy held Lehigh without a basket for 5½ minutes while building a 71-61 lead with 3:39 to play. Navy's lead was down to

74-73 when Fannin shook loose for a layup with 31 left.

Bucknell 69, Army 55: At West Point, N.Y., Charles Lee scored 22 points for Bucknell (18-8), which used runs of 18-2 in the first half and 24-9 in the second to dominate Army (3-21).

Lee hit two three-pointers as Bucknell turned a 12-8 deficit into a 26-15 lead with 3:42 left in the first half, then added six points as the Bison expanded a six-point halftime lead to 54-33 with 9:01 to play.

Matt Bell led all Navy players with 23 points and Grant Carter and Jarell Brown had 11 each.

Kentucky rolls over Bulldogs for 50th 20-win season

The Associated Press

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Freshman center Randolph Morris scored 17 points to lead seven players in double figures and No. 3 Kentucky reached 50 victories for a record 50th time with a 94-78 thrashing of Mississippi State Saturday night.

Kentucky (20-3, 11-1 Southeastern Conference) posted its highest point total of the season in posting its milestone 20th victory. The Wildcats' 50-20 win seasons is three better than runner-up North Carolina.

Kelenna Azubuike scored 15 points and Patrick Sparks added 14 points and made four three-pointers for Kentucky, which has won 19 straight games following a loss. The Wildcats lost 73-61 at South Carolina on Tuesday.

Kentucky forced Mississippi State (18-8, 6-6) into 23 turnovers and limited forward Lawrence Roberts from entering the second in the SEC in scoring and first in rebounding, to seven points and three rebounds.

No. 4 North Carolina 88, Clemson 56: Jawad Williams scored 17 points, sixth-man Marvin Williams added 14 and the Tar Heels improved to 51-0 at home against Clemson.

Men's Top 25 Roundup

Sean May finished with 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Tar Heels (22-3, 10-2), who moved into a first-place tie with Wake Forest in the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Shawn Ford led Clemson (12-13, 2-10) with 13 points.

No. 8 Oklahoma 81, Texas Tech 56: John Lucas III scored 25 points and James On Curry had 10 of his 15 in the second half as the Cowboys moved into a tie for first place in the Big 12 with Kansas.

Curry scored 10 points during a 14-2 run that helped Oklahoma State (20-3, 10-2) pull away early in the second half.

Martin Zeno had 19 points for visiting Texas Tech (16-7, 8-4).

No. 13 Gonzaga 75, San Francisco 73: Adam Morrison scored 28 points, including a jumper with less than a second remaining, as host Gonzaga (21-4, 11-2 West Coast Conference) avenged an earlier loss to the Dons (14-11, 5-7) and moved 2½ games ahead of Saint Mary's in the race for the regular season championship.

No. 15 Washington 68, Washington St. 55: Tre Simmons scored 16 points to lead Washington (21-4, 11-3 Pac-10) to victory at Washington State (10-13, 5-9). Washington has won 14 of the past 18 against Washington State.

No. 16 Alabama 87, South Carolina 68: Kennedy Winston and Earnest Shelton combined to hit seven three-pointers in the second half and Alabama (21-4, 10-2 Southeastern Conference) remained unbeaten at home and won for the 10th time in 11 games.

Carlos Powell had 17 points for the Gamecocks (14-9, 6-6), who were coming off an upset of No. 3 Kentucky.

No. 19 Connecticut 85, Rutgers 63: Charlie Villanueva and Josh Boone each scored 21 points and visiting Connecticut (17-6, 9-3 Big East) used an early 26-5 run to take control against Rutgers (8-15, 2-11).

No. 19 Pacific 73, UTEP 66: David Doubic scored 22 points and hit a key three-pointer with 1:18 left to lead Pacific (22-2) to its 18th straight victory.

Omari Thomas had 21 points and 12 rebounds for UTEP (20-7), which lost for the fourth time in seven games.

No. 21 Oklahoma 69, Kansas

St. 68: Drew Lavender's improbable basket at the buzzer capped a 29-point outing as Oklahoma (19-6, 8-4 Big 12) snapped a three-game road losing streak.

Clint Stewart stole David Godbold's inbounds pass and then hit the second of two free throws with 4.5 seconds to go, putting Kansas State (13-10, 3-9) up 68-67.

The 5-foot-7 Lavender tore downcourt and flipped the ball up from the baseline with less than a second left. Time expired as the ball hit the rim, bouncing twice — each time just missing an Oklahoma player's hands — and fell through to extend the Wildcats' losing streak to six games.

Carter Martin had 22 points for Kansas State.

No. 22 Maryland 92, Virginia 89 (207): John Gilchrist had 22 points, including the go-ahead three-pointer with 1:12 left in the second overtime, for the Terrapins.

Virginia had a chance to tie it with 18 seconds to go in the second overtime, but Elton Brown missed two free throws, capping a 3-for-13 showing from the line.

The Terrapins (16-8, 7-6 Atlantic Coast Conference) twice saw the game extended when Virginia made three-pointers on its final possession.

Freshman Sean Singletary had 23 points and nine assists for the Cavaliers (13-11, 4-9).

No. 23 Charlotte 86, Tulane 67: Eddie Basden scored 27 points and 14 rebounds, leading Charlotte over Tulane.

The 49ers (19-4, 10-2 Conference USA) won their fifth straight game to tie No. 12 Louisville for first place in the conference.

The Green Wave (9-14, 3-9) lost for the fourth time in five games.

Curtis Withers scored 26 points to match his average over the last four games. Brendan Plavich scored 14.

Quincy Davis led Tulane with 14 points, Taylor Rochestie had 12 and Matt Wieston 11.

No. 24 Cincinnati 72, UAB 69: Jason Maxcili had 22 points and 11 rebounds to lead fu-stricken Cincinnati.

The Bearcats (20-6, 8-4 Conference USA) had a nine-point lead cut to one in the final minute, but Arneim Kirkland clinched it by making two free throws with 9.9 seconds left.

Kevin Caldwell's "Squeaky" Johnson missed the first of a long three-pointer just before the buzzer.

Donnell Taylor and Marvett McDonald each had 16 points for Alabama-Birmingham (16-9, 6-6), which has lost four in a row for the first time since 2001-02.

Middleweight Hopkins defends title 20th time

BY TIM DAHLBERG
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Bernard Hopkins never claimed he was the prettiest fighter, just the best. Even at the age of 40, he was good enough Saturday night to reach another milestone and win another fight.

Hopkins overcame his usual slow start to dominate Howard Eastman, winning a lopsided 12-round decision to join some of boxing's elite in the record books by making his 20th successful middleweight title defense.

"This was very special, personal to Bernard Hopkins," Hopkins said. "I believe it will be documented in boxing history as years and centuries go on."

In a fight that was booed by many at the Staples Center, Hopkins won easily on all three ringside scorecards to remain unbeaten in the last 11 years. He did it by moving and staying focused and being brutally efficient with his punches.

The crowd of 12,828 might not have appreciated it enough, but Hopkins' new promoter did.

"It's unheard of," said Oscar De La Hoya, who lost to Hopkins in his 19th title defense. "I don't think we'll ever see it again."

The fight was the first for Hopkins since turning 40, an age when most fighters have long since left the ring. But he appeared to be the fresher fighter in the later rounds as he used an unorthodox but effective style to win the fight.

The judge had the fight 119-110 in favor of Hopkins, while a second had it 117-111. The third judge had the fight 116-112, the same score as The Associated Press.

"Bernard Hopkins is a true professional," said Roy Jones Jr., who was watching at ringside.

It was the first middleweight title fight in Los Angeles since Sugar Ray Robinson and Gene Fullmer fought to a draw in 1960, and though it was lacking in excitement at times, there was no question who won the fight.

No question that is, except from Eastman, who complained he should have been given more credit for pursuing Hopkins much of the fight.

"He ran from me the whole night," Eastman said. "He was the champion fighting in his own backyard but I dictated the pace. He didn't fight like a champ. He never hurt me."

Eastman, a British fighter, has never lost in the United Kingdom. And he's never won outside of it, losing a title fight to William Joppy in 2001 and then losing his second title shot to Hopkins.

Eastman (40-2) threw far more punches than Hopkins (46-2-1), but many of them found air as Hopkins ducked, moved and often made Eastman pay by coming back with a counterpunch.

Ringside punch stats showed Hopkins was much more efficient while Eastman was much busier. Hopkins landed 146 of 346 punches, while Eastman landed 82 of 609.

"They wanted to see [Arturo] Gatti [Mickey] Ward," Hopkins said. "I didn't want to fight."

Hopkins started cautiously as usual, but Eastman was even more cautious, barely throwing a punch in the first round and drawing boos from the crowd at the Staples Center.

By the fourth round, though, the crowd was booing the champion as Hopkins moved backward around the ring, occasionally posing as if he was going to throw a punch, but throwing only a few.

The fight finally heated up late in the



Defending champion Bernard Hopkins, right, lands a hard right to the head of Britain's Howard Eastman in the sixth round of their WBC middleweight championship bout.

fifth round — the same round Eastman had predicted he would stop Hopkins — when the challenger landed a big right hand to Hopkins' head. Fighting out of his corner, Hopkins responded by landing a stinging left and the two traded punches as the round came to a close.

"You've taken his best shot now," Eastman's corner told him. "That's all he's got." Though Hopkins seemed to be getting better as the fight went on, Eastman was still throwing punches with abandon and was giving the champion a fight. In the corner after the 10th round, trainer Bouie Fisher urged Hopkins to pick up the pace.

"Get this guy out of there, get this guy out of there," Fisher said. "You've let him hang around too long."

On the undercard, Jermain Taylor made a case for himself as the future of the middleweight division — and a possible contender for Hopkins — by stopping Daniel Edouard in the third round with a series of devastating shots to the head.

Taylor showed that he isn't far from a possible title shot himself by taking apart Edouard after referee Ray Corona stopped the fight at 2:26 of the third round.

The 2000 Olympic bronze medalist remained undefeated and scored his 17th knockout in 23 fights in an impressive performance that had the crowd at Staples Center on its feet cheering.

"I believe I'm ready for Hopkins," Taylor said. "I'm a fighter."

Taylor not only landed a lot of punches, but landed them with efficiency as he dominated the fight and handed Edouard (16-1-2) his first loss as a pro.

Midway through the third round, Taylor landed two right hands to the head and then followed Edouard across the ring. He trapped him in the neutral corner and was landing punches at will against the defenseless Haitian when the referee moved between the two fighters and called the bout to an end.

Austria's Gruber wins super-G; Miller gets fourth

The Associated Press

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany — Christoph Gruber made up for his disappointing performance in the world ski championships with his first World Cup victory in four years.

Gruber, who failed to qualify for the Austrian downhill slalom at the worlds in Bormio and then went out in the first leg of the giant slalom, finally

Sports briefs

came through Sunday. He negotiated the soft snow and variable visibility to win the super giant slalom in 1 minute, 18.18 seconds.

American Bode Miller, world champion in the super-G and downhill, was fourth, 0.21 seconds off the pace. But it was enough for him to replace Hermann Maier as the super-G slalom leader. Miller now leads the discipline rankings with 375 points, one more than Maier.

As for Gruber, he finished 801, second ahead of second-place Didier Defago of Switzerland.

Gruber's last victory, also by 0.01, came in 2001 on this slope over Maier.

"This was a difficult day for me because my two downhill races here Friday and Saturday were not so good. I was 17th and 16th," Gruber said. "I was hoping to do some good downhill after Bormio, which was not so successful for me. So I wasn't very motivated when I woke up this morning."

The surprise of the day came from a 20-year-old, Francois Bourque, who clocked 1:18.22 for third place, becoming only the third Canadian man in history to climb a World Cup super-G podium.

The last time was 17 years ago, when Felix Bielezky won in 1988 in Leukerbad, Switzerland. Before that, Brian Stemmle placed third in Furano, Japan, in 1985.

Bourque had never finished in the top 10 in World Cup competition. His previous best results were a pair of 17ths in the super-Gs atKitzbuehel, Austria and Val Gardena, Italy this year.

Miller was next, and now leads the discipline standings. Michael Walchofer, winner of downhill races Friday and Saturday, finished fifth in 1:18.40 and is third in the standings in the region.

"It's just one point," Miller said. "It doesn't mean that much. There are a couple of races left

and it will probably go down to the wire. And Hermann Maier is skiing well."

"It was tough to run from where we were today," Miller said, referring to the later starters. "I think with better conditions Hermann could have won today."

Maier finished eighth in 1:18.54.

Jaidee wins Malaysian again

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand shot a 2-under 70 on Sunday to win the Malaysian Open for the second straight year.

Thongchai, a 34-year-old former paratrooper, finished at 21 under for his seventh career title, three strokes ahead of Jyoti Randhawa of India. The top-ranked player in Asia joined Gaurang Marsh (1974-75) and Tomoo Ishii (1964-65) as the only golfers to win back-to-back Malaysian Opens since the tournament was first held in 1962.

He also tied South Korean Kang Wook-soon with most victories in the region.

Randhawa birdied the last hole en route to a 67. Henrik Stenson of Sweden was third at 17 under

after a 67. Irishman Paul McGinley (68) and Niclas Fasth (68) were fourth, nine strokes back. Padraig Harrington, playing in the final group, faded to a 74 and finished tied for eighth, 11 behind.

McCullough seizes ACE lead

NAPLES, Fla. — Mike McCullough shot a 3-under 69 to take a two-stroke lead over Hale Irwin and Mark James in The ACE Group Classic.

The 59-year-old McCullough, seeking his third Champions Tour victory, had a 9-under 135 total on the TwinEagles course. Irwin, the 50-and-over tour's career victory leader with 41, shot a 70. James had a 68.

Curtis Strange, playing his first senior tour event, followed an opening 74 with a 71. The two-time U.S. Open champ was tied for 32nd, 10 strokes back.

Mauresmo tops V. Williams

ANTWERP, Belgium — Top seed Amelie Mauresmo beat Venus Williams 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 on Sunday in the Diamond Games for her first win of the year, denying the American a \$1.3 million gem-encrusted racket.

Williams, who complained af-

terward of a stomach injury, needed to beat Mauresmo to win the gold-and-diamond trophy, which goes to the first three-time winner in any five-year span. Since she won the title two of the last four years, Williams will have a last shot at the trophy next year.

Mauresmo trailed almost throughout the three-set thriller at the sold-out, 14,600-capacity Sports Palace and fought from behind in the last two sets, belying her reputation for struggling under pressure.

The 25-year-old Mauresmo now has 16 career titles and closes in again on WTA No. 1 Lindsay Davenport, a position she briefly held last year.

Federer rallies past Ljubicic

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands — Top-ranked Roger Federer of Switzerland rallied from a set down to beat Ivan Ljubicic 5-7, 7-5, 7-6 (5) and win the ABN Amro indoor tournament Sunday.

The match was capped by an entertaining third set of winning shots, duels at the net and a tense tiebreaker. It was a sharp contrast to the last time they met in a final, when Federer won 6-3, 6-1 at the Qatar Open in January.

Hawks' Smith slams Suns' quest for sweep

Phoenix's Nash, Richardson win events

BY JOHN MARSHALL

The Associated Press

DENVER — Josh Smith went retro to win the NBA's dunk contest.

Smith scored a 50 on his first dunk of the finals wearing the jersey of former Atlanta star Dominique Wilkins, then had another perfect score on his second dunk in his own Hawks jersey to beat Phoenix's Amare Stoudemire on Saturday night.

"He didn't know I was going to do that, but I was going to do a dunk symbolizing what he did in his previous years," said Smith, Atlanta's first round pick in 2004 after making the jump from high school. "He was real excited and shocked that I would do that."

Wilkins, a two-time dunk champion, handed the mantle and his jersey over just before Smith's first dunk of the final round, and the rookie didn't disappoint. Looking a whole lot like "Nique" — other than being left-handed — Smith leaped in for a windmill dunk that left the backboard and rim shaking and earned him a perfect 50.

Smith switched back to his No. 5 Hawks jersey and earned another 50 off a reverse-spin 360 — a Vince Carter in the 2000 contest.

"I think the whole jersey thing kind of made everybody a little nervous," said Wilkins, who won the contest in 1985 and 1990. "Like I said, he shocked me with that one. That was outstanding."

But it wasn't the only outstanding part.

Though former Nuggets player Chris Andersen drew some boos after needing eight tries to finish his first dunk, Smith and Stoudemire got the crowd going with their second dunks of the first round.

Smith started things off, earning a 50 by taking a pass from Denver's Kenyon Martin, who was seated in a chair, and throwing it down with a vicious windmill dunk after soaring over Martin.

Stoudemire did him one better on the next dunk, passing the ball off the backboard to teammate Suns teammate Steve Nash, who headed the ball back to Stoudemire for a one-handed 360 dunk.

"That was a good dunk by Amare and Steve, and I knew I had to pull something out of my hat to get by and win," Smith said.

Smith did and it prevented the Suns from completing a sweep on All-Star Saturday.

Phoenix's Quentin Richardson won the three-point shooting con-

test, making his final nine shots of the finals after opening with an airball to edge Philadelphia's Kyle Korver by one point.

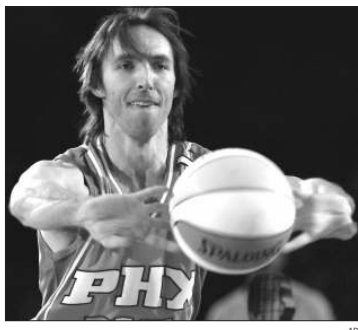
Richardson appeared to have no chance at catching Korver after missing his first four shots, but he hit four of five money balls — worth two points each — and had the strong finish to close with 19 points.

"In the first round, I felt like I was shooting a little too hard so the first shot [in the second round] I tried to shoot softer and it got a little too soft," Richardson said. "Then I got it going."

Denver's Voshon Lenard, who hasn't played this season since tearing his Achilles' tendon in the season opener, had the final chance to pass Richardson but couldn't come through. The leader after the first round with 17 points, Lenard needed to make all five shots in the final rack, but missed the first one and finished with 16 points.

Nash won the skills challenge, completing the final dribbling, passing and shooting course nearly 12 seconds faster than Denver's Earl Boykins.

Nash was the leader after the first round at 31.4 seconds, then completed the course in 25.8 the second time around. His only mis-



Phoenix Suns guard Steve Nash passes the ball on his way to winning the skills challenge competition in Denver on Saturday night.

take in the final was missing his first chest pass, but he got the second one and breezed through the rest of the skills after Boykins needed four tries to hit a three-pointer.

Shawn Marion, Diana Taurasi and Dan Majerle made it 3-for-3 for Phoenix by winning the shoot-

ing stars competition, making shots from six spots in just 28 seconds. Majerle capped the competition by hitting his second shot from halfcourt to help Phoenix beat Denver by 16 seconds.

"It's fun — we even got Thunder Dan back in the equation," Nash said. "It's great for the organization."

Local scoreboard

European wrestling championships

WIESBADEN ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany — Results from the championship bracket and third- and fifth-place matches Saturday on the final day of the two-day 2005 DODDS-Europe high school wrestling championship.

103 pounds
Semifinals: Anthony Davis (1, Würzburg) pin Ryan Singleton (4, Billburg) 3:04; Chris Ramer (2, Brussels) def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) pin Troy Carter (0, Ramstein) 2:57.

112 pounds
Semifinals: Daniel Bruni (1, Billburg) m. def. Nicholas Rogers (4, Patch) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

125 pounds
Semifinals: Garry Vogt (1, Awi) m. def. David Crow (Bismarck) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

138 pounds
Semifinals: Scott def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

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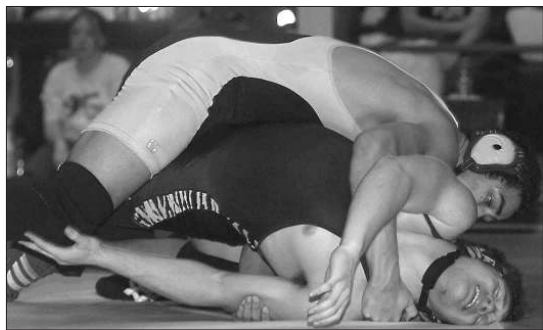
220 pounds
Semifinals: Scott def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

240 pounds
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300 pounds
Semifinals: Scott def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.



Wiesbaden's Chad Abramson wrestling Todd Thom to the mat in the 189-pound final at the DODDS-Europe wrestling finals in Wiesbaden on Saturday. Abramson won the match.

103 pounds
Semifinals: Anthony Davis (1, Würzburg) pin Ryan Singleton (4, Billburg) 3:04; Chris Ramer (2, Brussels) def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) pin Troy Carter (0, Ramstein) 2:57.

112 pounds
Semifinals: Daniel Bruni (1, Billburg) m. def. Nicholas Rogers (4, Patch) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

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138 pounds
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180 pounds
Semifinals: Scott def. Joz-Seth Romero (Chempinburg) 11:53; Paul Moser (2, Brussels) def. Michael Zach (3, Heil) 7:4.

189 pounds
Semifinals: Chad Abramson (1, Wiesbaden) m. def. Jim Curtis (4, Würzburg) 14:11; Todd Thom (2, M) def. Logan Rainforth (3, Ramo) 5:1.

200 pounds
Semifinals: Abramson def. Thom 6-4.

220 pounds
Semifinals: Abramson def. Thom 6-4.

240 pounds
Semifinals: Abramson def. Thom 6-4.

260 pounds
Semifinals: Abramson def. Thom 6-4.

285 pounds
Semifinals: Abramson def. Thom 6-4.

103 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

112 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

125 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

138 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

150 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

165 pounds
Semifinals: Ewing pin Simmons 5:27.

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Even Great One can't revive the NHL

BY HELENE ELLIOTT
AND CHRIS FOSTER

Los Angeles Times

The last, faint hope of reviving the NHL season was obliterated Saturday when league and union executives walked away from a 6½-hour meeting in New York without an agreement—and with a deepening distrust.

Although Commissioner Gary Bettman had canceled the season Wednesday, players thought enough time and flexibility remained to forge a deal and play a 28-game season. But even the addition of Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux to the NHL's negotiating team couldn't lift the sides to common ground on such issues as a salary cap, luxury tax, arbitration and qualifying offers to free agents.

Source said players felt stung by a "bait and switch" when the NHL didn't improve its last offer of a salary cap at \$42.5 million and stipulated the cap would not increase if revenue grew during a six-year deal. The NHL is also said to have cut its revenue-sharing offer, tightened rules on salary arbitration and qualifying offers to free agents, and set a dollar-for-dollar luxury tax at \$35 million.

League sources said the union continued to seek too high a salary cap and wouldn't negotiate a luxury tax potent enough to curb spending.

"The bottom line is they just don't trust each other," a source familiar with Saturday's talks said. "It's done. It's over with."

"This is worse than what happened on Wednesday. I don't know where we go now. The league and everyone involved with it is in a free-fall at this point."

Gretzky, managing partner of the Phoenix Coyotes, and Lemieux, player-owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins, contacted Bettman on Thursday and urged him to hold one last meeting before it would become impossible to squeeze in an abbreviated season. The three met Friday night in New York, where it's believed they discussed whether the NHL would accept a \$45 million salary cap if the union agreed to conditions that would discourage extravagant spending.

Bob Goodenow, the NHL Players' Association executive director who opposed renewing talks and didn't initially accompany the union delegation, was excluded from the main meeting Saturday. However, he and Bettman were nearby and were consulted during the numerous breaks.

In addition to Gretzky and Lemieux, the NHL was represented by Bill Daly, its chief legal coun-

"It was crystal clear from our standpoint that we weren't [close to a deal], and that was evident today."

Trevor Linden
NHLPA president



sel. The union was represented by Ted Saskin, its senior director; Trevor Linden, its president; Colorado Avalanche forward Vincent Damphousse, a member of its negotiating committee; and former player Mike Gartner, its director of business relations.

"I didn't think they were going to start up another meeting for failure," Ron Salzer, a prominent agent, said. "I thought it would be the perfect ending: You bring in Wayne Gretzky and Mario Lemieux—the game has never seen greater ambassadors. What better ending than to see these two knights in shining armor riding in on white horses to save the season?"

"I truly believed something significant could happen."

Instead, they were tripped up by their long-standing differences.

"We knew for a long time this

where it was going," Kings President Tim Leiweke, a staunch backer of Bettman, said. "Mr. Goodenow is very predictable."

"We have rolled over in the past, and he thought we would roll over again. You look at the track record the last 10 years and look at who gave in each time. It was I. I told everyone we owners had put ourselves in this position. Too often we've panicked, given in, caved. Not this time. And we never will. Do I love not having hockey? No. But if we have to exist another year without hockey, we will."

The unity of each side had fractured since the cancellation announcement. Several owners voiced anxiety to Bettman on Thursday about damage to the league's image and bottom line, and many players said they were puzzled by the union's about-face and acceptance of a salary cap Monday. The failure to save the season or generate enough understanding to schedule further talks could intensify an already cautious and costly dispute.

"I think it's a bad ending," Leiweke said. "Whatever pool of revenues we had to share just got a lot smaller. This thing is going to go backward. The pain will get

larger, the effect will get larger and the revenues the league generates will get smaller."

Bettman, whose decision to reconvene talks was criticized by a few owners, explained his actions in a letter to the league's Board of Governors, who will meet next week. In the letter, obtained by The Times, he said: "After Wednesday's announcement we were hearing a number of reports that Trevor Linden wanted to hear from us. Since we ultimately want a new collective-bargaining agreement, we did not stand on ceremony and we made contact."

"However, we also advised that the union should not assume that the season would be resurrected."

"On Friday morning Trevor spoke with Bill and said they would like to have us include Wayne and Mario in the meeting. To sum up our discussions, the union is still intent upon negotiating for more than we can afford. Incredibly, the union put nothing new or concrete on the table. At this time, there is no deal here. I was correct on Wednesday when I said we were much further apart than the media was portraying."

A source said players feared that if they had yielded a little Saturday, Bettman would have pushed for a lot.

"It was crystal clear from our standpoint that we weren't [close to a deal], and that was evident today," Linden said.

Stewart steers through bump, skid into Victory Lane

By Mike Harris
The Associated Press

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. — Tony Stewart drove through the grass, passed his buddy Dale Earnhardt Jr. and wound up in Victory Lane.

Stewart, the 2002 NASCAR Nextel Cup champion, claimed his first victory in Saturday on his 42nd career start in the three-ladder Busch series.

He also ended Earnhardt's step-race Busch winning streak at Daytona International Speedway.

"I had the drama, had the recovery, had the comeback," said Stewart, who charged to the lead with three laps remaining and won under a yellow flag after a last-lap crash. "I could not have scripted it any more exciting if I was making a movie."

Stewart, driving a Chevrolet owned by fellow Nextel Cup bad boy Kevin Harvick, led a race-high 46 laps on the 2½-mile oval. Stewart's hopes nearly ended with 25 laps to go when a bump from Carl Edwards sent Stewart skidding through the infield grass at 190 mph. Somehow, he kept the car going in the right direction, steering it back onto the high-banked oval.

"I couldn't pay the fines for what I was thinking," Stewart quipped. "There were a lot of things going through my mind. The first was, 'What am I going to tell my mom from the emergency room?'"

"It turned out a lot better than I thought it would. I thought I was going to hit the wall. It just was a matter of how hard."

Stewart fell to eighth, then to 17th after his crew needed extra time on the next pit stop to repair the damage.

Meanwhile, the focus turned to Earnhardt. Junior played a waiting game early in the race, content to stay near the back of



Tony Stewart (33) takes the checkered flag under caution in the Hershey's TAKE 5 300.

the pack along with teammate Martin Truex Jr., the defending Busch champion. After the halfway point, Earnhardt and Truex began drafting their way toward the front, quickly moving into the top 10. When

the other leaders made their final pit stops during a caution period with 20 laps remaining, Junior stayed on the track and moved into the lead. Truex took only two new tires and came out second.

That's when Stewart began his charge, slicing through the field and moving to fifth on another restart with four to go.

Then, with drafting help from Harvick, Stewart went roaring past the leaders on the outside of turn three. They held on for a 1-2 finish as a three-car accident behind them brought out a caution for the final lap.

"He deserved to win a lot more than he has, and we're glad he broke that wall down," said Harvick, who will use Stewart in five more races this season.

Earnhardt, who will go into Sunday's Daytona 500 as the favorite to repeat last year's victory, shrugged off the third-place finish.

"That's Tony Stewart," Earnhardt said. "He can do anything."

Truex, who will make his first Daytona 500 start Sunday, was encouraged by his fourth-place showing.

"Harvick and Stewart must have ganged up," Truex said. "They were coming like a freight train, and there was no way we were going to stop it."

Kasey Kahne wound up fifth, followed by Robby Gordon, Michael Waltrip and Biffle, 19-year-old Reed Sorenson and Carl Edwards.

Cup regulars — the "Buschwhackers" — took eight of the top 10 spots.

"We got ganged up on by those Cup guys," said Sorenson, a Busch rookie.

NASCAR spokesman Mike Zito said a post-race inspection revealed Stewart's car was too low by a fraction of an inch, but inspectors later determined that the off-course excursion caused damage to the underside of the car that made it too low.

Records fall at European Forces swim finale

BY BEN MURRAY

Stars and Stripes

MUNICH, Germany — The top swimmers at the European Forces Swim League championship broke 15 league records during the two-day event that ended Sunday.

The finale, which had 562 swimmers, included four new middle-distance events this year to let competitors branch out in what had become "a sprinter's league," said meet director Tom Lang.

Swimmers didn't discriminate between short and long races when it came to breaking league records, where multiple-threat racers dominated several age groups.

One of those pace setters was Lakenheath 15-year-old Konrad Korth, who desperately wanted to complete the 100-meter butterfly in less than a minute.

"My dad made a bet with me," Korth said. "If I get a 59, I get a car."

Though Korth's bet of 1 minute, 4.59 seconds was a record-setter, his father had played it safe in the wager. Still, it was Korth's fourth gold-medal performance at the meet. The others came in the 100-meter freestyle, the 200-meter individual medley, where he set a record with a time of 2:23.81, and the 400-meter freestyle, where he smashed his own mark by 4 seconds with a time of 4:21.99.

Korth's younger brother, 9-year-old Kilian Korth, won two individual golds and a silver on Sunday.

Also adding a little extra competition to their races were Brussels Octopus swimmer Felix Carritt-Kurzahn, 14, and his friendly rival Christian Northe, 14, from the Sigonella Swordfish.



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Tom Walker, 19, from the SHAPE Seals goes through the motions of his stroke, just moments before setting the European Forces Swim League record in the 50-meter freestyle with a time of 26.67.

The pair agreed to stay even for the first half of the 200 individual medley then open the throttle.

Northe, who on Saturday set an EPFL short-course record in the 13-14 boys 400-meter freestyle, edged his friend by a little more than two seconds with a record-breaking time of 2:27.74. But Carritt-Kurzahn got him back later in the 200 freestyle, where he won in 2:10.11, about three seconds ahead of Northe.

For many at the meet, however, it was enough to swim against their own best times and personal goals.

For 12-year-old Sandra Wood from the Würzburg Waves, a dominating swimmer seeded first in five individual events at the championship, the big goal for the day was to set the record in the girls 50 freestyle.



BEN MURRAY/Stars and Stripes

Lakenheath Barracuda Konrad Korth, 15, swims the breaststroke leg of the 200-meter IM, one of the four events he won at the European Forces Swim League Championships.

Wood touched the wall just five one-hundredths of a second over the mark.

Also making a sweep of her events Sunday was 16-year-old Frankie Houck from the Wiesbaden Wahos, who took first place in the 200-meter individual medley, the 100 butterfly and the 50 freestyle, where she became the league's new record

holder with a time of 28.54.

Continuing the trend of multiple-threat girls at the championship meet was 14-year-old Haley Horkey from the Berlin Bear-a-cudas, who won the 100-meter freestyle and set records in the 200 freestyle (2:27.73) and the 50 freestyle (30.84).

E-mail Ben Murray at: murrayb@mail.strips.es.osd.mil

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Even best efforts of Gretzky,
Lemieux can't save season,
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BC celebrates 'on top of hill'

No. 6 Eagles 'create space' in Big East standings by beating No. 9 Syracuse

By JIMMY GOLEN

The Associated Press

BOSTON — Jared Dudley threw the ball in the air and let out a triumphant yell. Before long, the Boston College student body would join him on the court.

Dudley scored 21 points before dribbling out the final seconds in the sixth-ranked Eagles' 65-60 victory over No. 9 Syracuse on Saturday, setting loose a storm of students who charged the court to celebrate one of the most anticipated matchups in school history.

"I've never had that here," said Craig Smith, BC's Big East player of the year candidate, who had 16 points and 15 rebounds. "It didn't surprise me because I got here two hours before the game and people were going crazy."

Jermaine Watson went 5-for-6 from the free throw line down the stretch for BC (22-1, 11-1), which opened a two-game

lead over No. 18 Connecticut in the conference, Syracuse (22-5, 9-4) and No. 17 Pittsburgh are another half-game behind BC, which is leaving for the Atlantic Coast Conference next season.

"It ain't over," BC coach Al Skinner said. "We were still going to be in first place if we lost, but it gave us a chance to create a little more space at the top. This is a big win for us."

Gerry McNamara scored 18 points for Syracuse, but he missed three three-pointers in the final 28 seconds — two of them airballs — and went 2-for-11 from beyond the arc overall. The Orange have lost four of their past six games, all to ranked teams.

Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim snickered about the Conte Forum crowd charging the court, something usually reserved for big upsets.

"I thought they were ranked sixth in the country," he said sarcastically. "Maybe they just think we're better than we are."

A hockey school which has always been slow to get excited about its revenue sports, Saturday's game attracted some rare attention from the student body and the Boston fans still basking in the Patriots' success and eager for the Red Sox to start a new season.

The usual rivalry with Syracuse became more intense when BC said in 2003 that it would leave the Big East for the ACC, which courted the Orange but did not invite them. Syracuse extracted its revenge with a 43-17 victory in football last fall that knocked the Eagles from a lucrative Fiesta Bowl bid to the Continental Tire Bowl.

With both basketball teams holding top-10 rankings, the game sold out quickly, tickets were being scalped at many times face value and fans were lined up at both sides of the arena before the game, waiting for the gates to open.

"They were predicting it would be the

biggest game in Conte's history," Watson said. "We just have a huge target on us. We're on top of the hill."

The Eagles held a 58-52 lead with 1:15 left when Louie McCroskey hit a three-pointer to put Syracuse within one possession. But Nate Doornkamp turned Hakim Warrick away with 56 seconds left and Dudley came away with the ball.

Warrick finished with 12 points.

Dudley made two free throws to make it 60-55. McNamara missed a three-pointer but hit the next one to make it a two-point game.

Watson made one of two free throws, and McNamara fired up another from far beyond the arc — an airball that Josh Pace put back to make it 61-60 with 27 seconds left. Watson hit two more free throws, but McNamara threw up another airball and it took the Orange 8 seconds to foul.

With Dudley waving his arms to encourage a crowd that didn't need it, Watson hit two more free throws to make it 65-60.

Outfitted to make the highlights



Atlanta Hawks' Josh Smith heads toward the basket during the NBA All-Star slam dunk contest on Saturday night in Denver. Smith, wearing the jersey of the former dunk king nicknamed "The Human Highlight Reel," won the contest. See Page 33 for coverage of the NBA's All-Star Saturday.



Stewart ends
Earnhardt's streak
with Busch victory

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Hopkins, 40,
wins 20th straight
title defense

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European Forces swimmers dive into record book Page 35

